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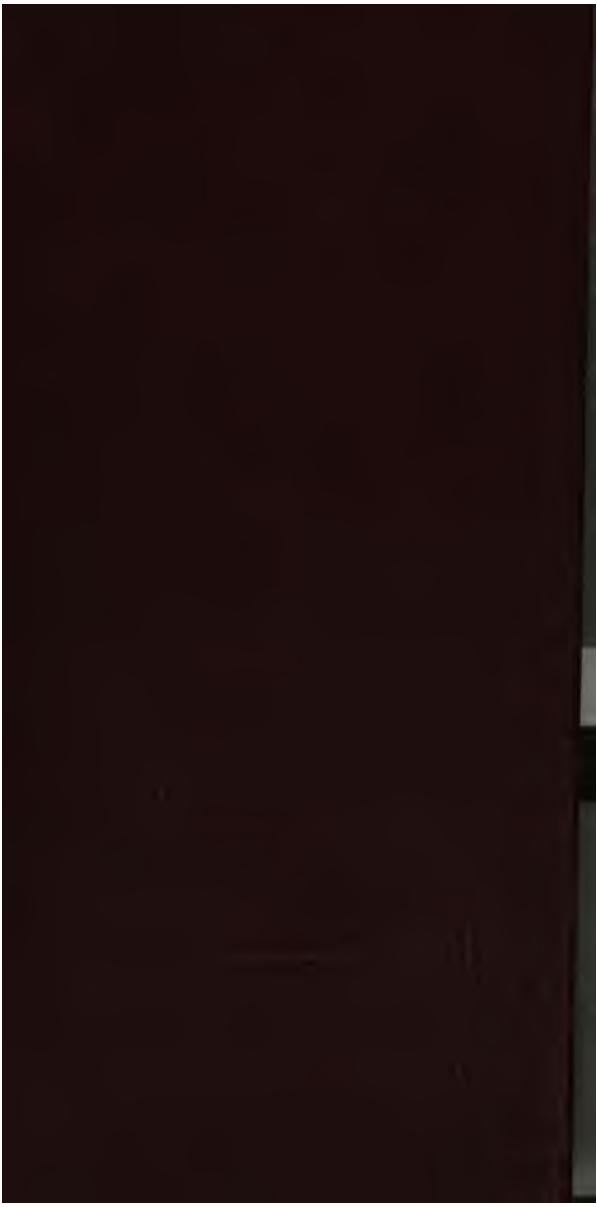

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THE MOUNTAIN-LOVERS: a Ro

DARTHÛLA: A Celtic Romance

PHARAIS A ROMANCE OF THE ISLES BY FIONA MACLEOD

PRINTED BY HARPUR AND MURRAY AT THE MORAY PRESS IN DERBY MAY 1894 AND SOLD BY FRANK MURRAY AT HIS BOOKSHOPS IN DERBY LEICESTER AND NOTTINGHAM

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"*Mithich domh triall gu tigh*
(It is time for me to go up unto the Hc
Muireadhach

"*How many beautiful things have*
Pharais."
"Bileag·

To

E. W. R.

Dear friend,—While you gratify me by your pleasure in this inscription, you modestly deprecate the dedication to you of this story of alien life—of that unfamiliar island-life so alien in all ways from the life of cities, and, let me add, from that of the great mass of the nation to which, in the communal sense, we both belong. But in the Domhan-Tòir of friendship there are resting-places where all barriers of race, training, and circumstance fall away in dust. At one of these places of peace we met, a long while ago, and found that we loved the same things, and in the same way. You have been in the charmed West yourself: have seen the gloom and shine of the mountains that throw their shadow on the sea: have heard the wave whisper along that haunted shore which none loves save with passion, and none, loving, can bear to be long parted from. You, unlike so many who delight only in the magic of sunshine and cloud, love this dear land when the mists drive across the hillsides, and the brown torrents are in spate, and the rain and the black wind make a gloom upon every loch, and fill with the dusk of storm every strath, and glen, and corrie. Not otherwise can one love it

dear, have, with the Celtic Helen, said heart—

Inmain tir in tir ud thoir,
Alba cona lingantaibh ! . . .

["*Beloved is that eastern land,*
Alba of the lochs."]

In the mythology of the Gael are th
gotten deities, children of Delbaith
These are Seithoir, Teithoir, and K
One dwells throughout the sea, and bene
soles of the feet of another are the highest
and these two may be held sacred
beauty they weave for the joy of eye an
But now that, as surely none may g
Keithoir is blind and weary, let us wor
his fane rather than give all our hom
the others. For Keithoir is the god
earth ; dark-eyed, shadowy brother of
and his fane is among the lonely glen
mountains and lonelier isles of "Alba
ingantaibh." *It is because you and I*
he children of Keithoir that I wish

is it too presumptuous of me to hope that here, and mayhap elsewhere, I, the latest comer among older and worthier celebrants and co-enthusiasts, likewise may do something, howsoever little, to win a further measure of heed for, and more intimate sympathy with, that old charm and stellar beauty of Celtic thought and imagination, now, alas, like so many other lovely things, growing more and more remote, discoverable seldom in books, and elusive amid the sayings and oral legends and fragmentary songs of a passing race?

A passing race: and yet, mayhap not so. Change is inevitable; and even if we could hear the wind blowing along Magh Mell—the Plain of Honey—we might list to a new note, bitter-sweet: and, doubtless, the waves falling over the green roof of Tir-na-Thonn' murmur drowsily of a shifting of the veils of circumstance, which Keithoir weaves blindly in his dark place. But what was, surely is; and what is, surely may yet be. The form changes; the essential abides. As the saying goes among the islefolk: The shadow fleets beneath the cloud driven by the wind, and the cloud falls in rain or is sucked of the sun, but the wind sways this way and that for ever. It may well be that the Celtic Dream is not doomed to become a memory merely. Were it so, there would be less joy in all Springs to come, less hope in all brown Autumns; and the cold of a deathlier chill in all Winters still dreaming by the Pole. For the Celtic joy in the life of Nature—the Celtic vision—is a thing apart: it

deepening twilight, or to a forlorn p
Tir Tairngire—that Land of Prom
borders shine with the loveliness of all
or lost, or banished dreams and re
Beauty. It may be that she w
to a wider sway, over a disfrontiere
Blue are the hills that are far from us
saying of the Gael, whose soul as well
heart speaks therein. Far hills, recede
Dim veils of blue, woven from wit
without, haunt us, allure us, always,

But now, before I send you my last
greeting, let me add (rather for other
than for you, who already know of
word concerning the Gaelic runes inte
in Pharais.*

The "Urnuigh Smalaidh Teine" *(p.*
"Altachadh Leapa" *(p. 52)—respec*
prayer to be said at covering up the
at bed-time and a Rest-blessing—are
ancient Celtic folklore which were sen
Rev. Dr. Alexander Stewart, of

Lochaber" fame, by Mr. A. A. Carmichael, of South Uist, who took them down from the recitation of a man living at Iocar of Uist. From the same Hebridean source came the "Rann Buachailleachd," *or rune to be said over cattle when led to pasture at morn, introduced at p.* 59. *The English versions, by Dr. Stewart, appeared first in "The Inverness Courier," over twenty years ago. There are several versions current of the authentic incident of the innocent old woman held to be a witch, and of her prayer. I weave into my story the episode as I heard it many years ago, though with the rune rescued from oblivion by Dr. Stewart, rather than with the longer and commonly corrupted version still to be heard by the croft-fire in many localities, all "the far cry" from the Ord of Sutherland to the Rhinns of Islay. The* "Laoidh Mhnathan"—*the Chant of Women, at p.* 117—*is not ancient in the actual form here given, which is from an unpublished volume of* "Oràin' Spioradail."

The sweetest-voiced of the younger Irish singers of to-day has spoken of the Celtic Twilight. A twilight it is; but, if night follow gloaming, so also does dawn succeed night. Meanwhile, twilight voices are sweet, if faint and far, and linger lovingly in the ear.

There is another Pàras than that seen of Alastair of Innisrôn—the Tîr-na-h'Oigh of friendship. Therein we both have seen beautiful visions and dreamed dreams. Take, then, out of my heart, this book of vision and dream.

FIONA MACLEOD.

"O bileag-geal,
O bileag-na-Toscùil, bileag Phara
O tha e boidheach!
Tha e boidheach!"

I.

IT was midway in the seventh month of her great joy that the child moved, while a rapture leaped to her heart, within the womb of Lora, daughter of the dead Norman Maclean, minister of Innisròn, in the Outer Isles.

On the same eve the cruel sorrow came to her that had lain waiting in the dark place beyond the sunrise.

Alastair, her so dearly beloved, had gone, three days earlier, by the Western Isles steamer to the port of Greenock, thence to fare to Glasgow, to learn from a great professor of medicine concerning that which so troubled him—both by reason of what the islesmen whispered among themselves, and for what he felt of his own secret pain and apprehension.

voyage. ..
were still steeped in the
in autumn, when the
was purple, and every bc
islet was as transparent
vapour of amethyst risir
and hollow caverns of a
blue.

Hither Lora had com
of the afternoon. The
gentle and of as sweet
as though it were Sumn
than only the extreme of
looked, shading her eyes
saw the blue of the mi
as a benediction upon
deep, but paler by
darkest turquoise is
lightest sapphire. Sh
from the pearl-blue
to the heart of the
there the soul of
risen. Beneath th

seen, known only of their waving tails, swinging silently as the bulls dreamed of the hill-pastures they should see no more. Yellow-green in the sunlit spaces as the sea-hair was, it was dark against the shifting green light of the water under the rocks, and till so far out as the moving blue encroached.

To Lora's right ran a curved inlet, ending in a pool fringed with dappled fronds of sea-fern, mare's-tails, and intricate bladder-wrack. In the clear hollow were visible the wave-worn stones at the bottom, many crowned with spreading anemones, with here and there a star-fish motionlessly agleam, or a cloud of vanishing shrimps above the patches of sand, or hermit crabs toiling cumbrously from perilous shelter to more sure havens. Looking down she saw herself, as though her wraith had suddenly crept therein and was waiting to whisper that which, once uttered and once heard, would mean disunion no more.

Slipping softly to her knees, she crouched over the pool. Long and dreamily she gazed into its depths. What was this phantasm, she wondered, that lay there in the green-gloom as though awaiting her? Was it, in truth, the real Lora, and she but the wraith?

ot menace.

A thrill of fear went to th heart. A mass of shadow h denly obscured her image water. Her swift fancy suggest her wraith had abruptly shroud self, fearful of revelation. Th moment she realised that her ow of dark hair had fallen down h and upon her shoulders—hair d twilight, but interwrought with of bronze that, in the shine of sun, made an evasive golden gl

She shuddered as she percei eyes of her other self intently ing her through that cloudy A breath came from the pool, s shrewd, and cold as though aris those sea-sepulchres whence steal their scales of gold and sil thin voice was in her ears that the lap of the tide or the c

cried; but the sound of her own awed voice broke the spell: and almost at the same moment an eddy of wind came circling over the rock-bastions of the isle, and, passing as a tremulous hand over the pool, ruffled it into a sudden silvery sheen.

With a blithe laugh, Lora rose to her feet. The sunlight dwelt about her as though she were the sweetest flower in that lost garden of Aodh the poet, where the streams are unspanned rainbows flowing to the skiey cauldrons below the four quarters, and where every white flower has at dusk a voice, a whisper, of surpassing sweetness.

"O Alastair, Alastair!" she cried, "will the boat never be coming that is to bring you back to me!"

Not a black spot anywhere, of wherry or steamer, caught the leaping gaze. Like a bird it moved across the sea, and found no object whereon to alight.

The *Clansman* was often late; but her smoke could be seen across Dunmore Head nigh upon quarter of an hour before her prow combed the froth from the Sound.

With a sigh, the girl moved slowly back by the way she had come. Over and over, as she went, she sang, crooningly, lines from a sweet song of the Gael, *O, Till, a Leannain!*

... was pity in them and som
of a bewildered awe.

"Aye," he muttered below his l
"though ye sing for your dear
return, ye know not what I
Have I not had the vision of hin
the mist growin' up an' up, an'
the green grass turn to black mo
his feet?"

Lora, unwitting, passed; an
heard her voice wax and wan
falling water in a glen where
baffled wind among the trees so
now this way and now that:—

"Mo chridhe-sa! 's tusa 'bhios tru
'bhios truagh,
Mur pill is' 'thog oirre gu cluaidh
cluaidh!"

She went past the boulder on
path that hid the clachan from v
and within a net-throw of which
he byre of M...

the byre with a burthen of fresh bracken for Ian Maclean's bed—for the old islesman abode by the way of his fathers, and was content to sleep on a deerskin spread upon fresh-gathered fern—when she caught sight of Lora. She stopped, and with an eager glance looked at the girl: then beyond, and finally seaward, with her long, thin, brown arm at an angle, and her hand curved over her eyes against the glare of the water.

Silence was about her as a garment. Every motion of her, even, suggested a deep calm. Mrs. Maclean spoke seldom, and when she said aught it was in a low voice, sweet and serene, but as though it came from a distance and in the twilight. She was of the shadow, as the islesmen say; and strangers thought her to be austere in look and manner, though that was only because she gazed long before she replied to one foreign to her and her life: having the Gaelic, too, so much more natively than the English, that oftentimes she had to translate the one speech into the other nearer to her: that, and also because the quiet of the sea was upon her, as often with hill-folk there is a hushed voice and mien.

Lora knew what was in her mind

up Choc-an-Toiain; from there
the smoke of the *Clansman*
She is often as late as this."

Mrs. Maclean looked com
ately at the girl.

"Mayhap the *Clansman* wil
coming this way at all to-nigh
She may be going by Kyle-na-S

A flush came into Lora's fac
eyes darkened, as a tarn under

"And for why would she
sailing this-way to-night, when
is coming home, and is to l
before sundown?"

"He may have been unable t
If he does not come to-day,
doubtless be here to-morrow."

"To-morrow! O Mary, Ma
you ever loved that you can sp
that? Think what Alastair we
for! Surely you do not know h
pain is at my heart?"

"Truly *mistress*. But it

evening, and has gone as you say by Kyle-na-Sith, she will not be here again till the day *after* to-morrow!"

"Alastair could come by the other way, by the Inverary boat, and thence by the herring-steamer from Dunmore, after he had reached it from Uan Point or by way of Craig-Sionnach."

"That may be, of course; but I think not. I cannot believe the boat will not be here to-night."

Both stood motionless, with their hands shading their eyes, and looking across the wide Sound, where the tide bubbled and foamed against the slight easterly wind-drift. The late sunlight fell full upon them, working its miracle of gold here and there, and making the skin like a flower. The outline of each figure stood out darkly clear as against a screen of amber.

For a time neither spoke. At last, with a faint sigh, Mrs. Maclean turned.

"Did you see Ian on your way, *Lora-mo-ghràidh?*"

"No."

"Do not have speech with the old man to-night, dear one. He is not himself."

"Has he had the sight again?"

"Ay, Lora."

Again a silence fell. The girl stood moodily, with her eyes on the ground:

"Ian has never had the sight a
upon . . . upon Alastair, has h
"How can I say, *Lora-gaolaich*
"But do you know if he has i
you do not tell me, I will ask him
"I asked him that only yester-n
ing. He shook his head."
"Do you believe he can forese
that is to happen?"
"No. Those who have the v
do not read all that is in the fu
Only God knows. They can see
thing of peril, ay, and the evil of
dent, and even Death—and wh
more, the nearness and sometime
way of it. But no man sees more
this—unless, indeed, he has bee
Tir-na-h'Oigh."
Mrs. Maclean spoke the last w
almost in a whisper, and as though
said them in a dream.
"Unless he has been to Ti
h'Oigh, Mary?"

and is lapped by no green waves such as we know here, and that those who go hither do so in sleep, or in vision, or when God has filled with dusk the house of the brain."

"And when a man has been to Tir-na-h' Oigh in sleep, or in dream, or in mind-dark, does he see there what shall soon happen here?"

"It is said."

"Has Ian been beyond the West?"

"No."

"Then what he sees when he has the sight upon him is not *beannaichte:* is not a thing out of heaven?"

"I cannot say. I think not."

"Mary, is it the truth you are now telling me?"

A troubled expression came into the woman's face, but she did not answer.

"And is it the truth, Mary, that Ian has not had the sight upon Alastair since he went away—that he did not have it last night or this morning?"

Lora leaned forward in her anxiety. She saw that in her companion's eyes which gave her the fear. But the next moment Mrs. Maclean smiled.

"I too have the sight, *Lora-ghaolach;* and shall I be telling you that which it will be giving you joy to hear?"

"Aye, surely, Mary!"

"Then I think you will soon be in

with a gasp of joy; and the n
ment she was moving down tl
again towards the little promon

The wind had risen slightly
splash, splash, of the sunny
waves against each other, the
of the blue water upon the le
the east, the stealthy whisper wh
emerald-green tide-flow slipped
the hollowed sandstone, the sp
the sea-wrack, the flashing fa
foam-send of the gannets, the
the gulls, the slap of wind as i
over the forehead of the isle and
the sea a score of fathoms out
all gave her a sense of hap
The world seemed suddenly t
grown young. The exultant Ce
stood over against the brooding
shadow, and believed the lances
sunlight could keep at bay all t
talions of gloom.

The breeze was variable [redacted]

west, and even caused a white foam along the hither marge of the promontory.

With eager eyes she watched the vessel round the point. After all, it was just possible she might not be the *Clansman.*

But the last sunglow shone full against Dunmore and upon the bows of the steamer as she swung to the helm; and the moment the red funnel changed from a dusky russet into a flame of red, Lora's new anxiety was assuaged. She knew every line of the boat, and already she felt Alastair's kisses on her lips. The usual long summer-gloaming darkened swiftly—for faint films of coming change were being woven across the span of the sky from mainland oceanward. Even as the watcher on Innisròn stood, leaning forward in her eager outlook, she saw the extreme of the light lift upward as though it were the indrawn shaft of a fan. The contours of the steamer grew confused: a velvety duskiness overspread Dunmore foreland.

The sky overhead had become a vast lift of perishing yellow—a spent wave of daffodil by the north and by the south; westward, of lemon, deepening into a luminous orange glow shot

Lora stood as though wrough
marble. She had seen that wl
made the blood leap from her h
and surge in her ears, and clan
against her brain.

No pennon flew at the peak of
steamer's foremast. This meant th
was neither passenger nor freight tc
landed at Innisròn, so that there
no need for the ferry.

She could scarcely believe it p
sible that the *Clansman* could co
after all, and yet not bring Alas
back to her. It seemed absurd: so
ill-timed by-play; nay, a wanton crue
There must be some mistake, s
thought, as she peered hungrily ir
the sea-dusk.

Surely the steamer was heading t
much to the northward! With a c
Lora instinctively stretched her ar
towards the distant vessel; but
sound came fr[illegible]

all; for whenever the *Clansman* was too late for her flag-signal to be easily seen, she showed a green light a foot or so beneath the yellow.

Lora heard the heavy pulse of the engines, the churn of the beaten waves, even the delirious surge and suction as the spent water was driven along the hull and poured over and against the helm ere it was swept into the wake that glimmered white as a snow-wreath. So wrought was she that, at the same time, she was keenly conscious of the rapid *tweet-tweet-tweet-tweet-tweet—o-o-h sweet!—sweet!* of a yellowhammer among the whin close by, and of the strange, mournful cry of an oyster-opener as it flew with devious swoops towards some twilight eyrie.

The throb of the engines—the churn of the beaten waves—the sough of the swirling yeast—ever the churning, swirling, under-tumult, and through it and over it the heavy pulse, the deep panting rhythmic throb: this she heard, as it were the wrought surge of her own blood.

Would the green light never swing up to that yellow beacon?

A minute passed: two minutes: three! It was clear that the steamer had no need to call at Innisròn. She

...e idea that pernaps Alastair
board after all, but that he was
had forgotten to tell the ca
his wish to land by the island f

She turned, and, forgetful o
less of her condition, moved
from ledge to ledge, and thence
path to where, in the cove bey
clachan, the ferry-boat lay on t
swell, moored by a rope fastene
iron clank fixt in a boulder.

"Ian! Ian!" she cried, a
neared the cove; but at first s
no one, save Mrs. Maclean,
against the fire-glow from her c
"Ian! Ian!"

A dark figure rose from besi
ferry-shed.

"Is that you, Ian? *Am bh*
bhàta deas? Is the boat ready
ealamh! bi ealamh! mach am
quick! quick! out with the boat

In her eager haste sh

"*Oh, Ian, bi ealamh! bi ealamh! Faigh am bhàta deas! rach a stigh do'n bhàta!*"

Word for word, as is the wont of the people, he answered her:—

"Why is it that I should be quick? Why should I be getting the boat ready? For what should I be going into the boat?"

"The *Clansman!* Do you not see her? *Bi ealamh! bi ealamh!* or she will go past us like a dream."

"She has flown no flag, she has no green light at the mast. No one will be coming ashore, and no freight; and there is no freight to go from here, and no one who wants the ferry unless it be yourself, *Lora nighean Tormaid!*"

"Alastair is there: he was to come by the steamer to-day! Be quick, Ian! Do you hear me?"

"I hear," said the old man, as he slowly moved towards the boulder to his left, unloosed the rope from the iron clank, and drew the boat into the deep water alongside the landing-ledge.

"There is no good in going out, *Lora bhàn!* The wind is rising: ay, I tell you, the wind goes high: we may soon hear the howling of the sea-dogs."

But Lora, taking no notice, had sprung into the boat, and was already adjusting the long oars to the old-

... appeared to realise th
was in earnest. Standing, he
of the sloped mast, to steady
against the swaying as the tid
at the keel and the short wave
against the bows, and then
quick calculating glance seaw
at the advancing steamer.

Rapidly he gave his direc
Lora to take the helm and to
boat to windward :—

" *Gabh an stiuir, Lora : cu
ghàoith i !*"

The next moment the long c
moving slowly, but powerfully,
the water, and the ferry-boat dr
the open, and there lay over a li
the double swing of wind and t

The gloaming was now hea
the sea ; for a mist had come
the dipping of the sun, and th
the dusk.

Suddenly Ian called to Lora

deck, lighted the wick below the seat (after the wind had twice blown the flame into the dark), and then, gripping the mast, waved the signal to and fro overhead.

It was well he thought of this, for the steamer was going at full speed, and would not have slackened.

In a few minutes thereafter, the heavy stertorous throb and splash was close by them, while the screw revolved now at quarter-speed.

A hoarse voice came from the *Clansman :*

" Ferry ahoy ! "

" Ay, ay, ta ferry she will pe," called back Ian in the quaint English of which he was so proud : though he thought the language a poor, thin speech, and fit only for folk who never left the mainland.

" What are ye oot for, Ian ? Ha' ye ony body comin' aboard ? "

" We've come out for Mr. Alastair Macleod," Lora broke in eagerly : " we've come to take him off."

" Hoots, my girl, what for d' ye fash yersel an' us too for the like o' sic havers. There's no one aboard who wants to land at Innisròn : an' as for Alastair Macleod, he wasna' on the *Clansman* when we left Greenock, so he couldna' well be on her the now !

the Lord I'll . . . ”

But already the *Clansman* wa
ing ahead, and the second-c
menace was swallowed up
tumult of churned seas.

A minute later the steamer
dark mass to the nor'-west,
sheet of white writhing after h
a swirl of flaming cinders fro
funnel riding down the night
shoal of witch-lights.

The wherry rocked heavily,
as she was in the surge from the
and lying adrift in the sliding l
and rough criss-cross of the wa

Lora sat motionless and spe
The old man stared down ir
darkness of the boat: but thou
lips moved continuously, no
came from them.

For a time it was as though
lict were the sport of the sea,

clamour of breaking waves, and mostly from the now muffled, now loud and raucous sough of the wind as it swung low by the surge, or trailed off above the highest reach of the flying scud.

At last, in a whisper, the girl spoke.

"Ian, has aught of evil come to Alastair?"

"God forbid!"

"Do you know anything to his undoing?"

"No, Lora bhàn."

"You have not had the sight upon him lately?"

The islesman hesitated a moment. Raising his eyes at last, he glanced first at his companion and then out into the dusk across the waves, as though he expected to see some one or something there in answer to his quest.

"I dreamt a dream, Lora, wife of Alastair. I saw you and him and another go away into a strange place. You and the other were as shadows; but Alastair was a man, as now, though he walked through mist, and I saw nothing of him but from the waist upward."

Silence followed this, save for the wash of the sea, the moan of wind athwart wave, and the soft rush of the breeze overhead.

Ian rose, and made as though he

As if no interval had occurre
abruptly called him by name.

"Ian," she added, "what do
mist mean? . . . the mis
you saw about the feet and up
waist of Alastair?"

There was no reply. Ian let
sail, secured it, and then seate
self a few feet away from Lora.

She repeated the question: b
old man was obstinately silent, n
he speak word of any kind ti
wherry suddenly slackened, a
slipped under the lee of the littl
montory of the landing-place.

"The tide will be on turning
he exclaimed in his awkward En
chosen at the moment because h
not dare to speak in the Gaelic, f
as he was of having any further
with his companion; "and see,
all, the wind she will soon pe gon

ashore with ease. She looked at him as though she did not understand. The old man shifted uneasily. Then his conscience smote him for having used the cold, unfriendly English instead of the Gaelic so dear to them both: for was not the girl in the shadow of trouble, and did he not foresee for her more trouble to come? So, in a gentle, apologetic voice, he repeated in Gaelic what he had said about the tide and the wind:—

"*Thill an sruth: Dh' fhalbh a' ghàoth.*"

"There will be peace to-night," he added. "It was but a sunset breeze, after all. There will be no storm. I think now there will be a calm. It will be bad for the herring-boats. It is a long pull and a hard pull when the water sleeps against the keel. A dark night, too, most likely."

Lora rose, and slowly stepped on shore. She took no notice of Ian's sudden garrulity. She did not seem to see him even.

He looked at her with momentary resentment: but almost simultaneously a pitiful light came into his eyes.

"He will be to-morrow," he murmured, "and if not, then next day for sure."

Lora moved up the ledge in silence.

Ian answered simply, "*Be leibh !*" and turned to fasten t to the iron clank.

The dew was heavy, even rough salt spear-grass which frin sand above the cove. On th sheep-grass, on the rocky soil t it was dense, and shone whit shroud in a dark room. A bat this way and that, whirling s The fall of the wind still sighed bent rowan trees to the west clachan, where the pathway di from the shore. Against the t Cnoc-an-Iolair it swelled intermit its voice in the hollows and crev the crag broken up in moans an gasps, fainter and fainter.

Lora noted all this wearily advanced. She was conscious, a the nibbling of the sheep, que their thirst with the wet grass :

thoughts were all with Alastair and with what had kept him.

In her remote life there was scarce room for merely ordinary vicissitudes. It was not a thing to ponder as ominous that one should go out to sea after herring or mackerel and not return that night or the morrow, or even by the next gloaming, or second dawn; or that a man should go up among the hills and not come back for long after his expected hour. But that one could miss the great steamer was a thing scarce to believe in. To Lora, who had been so little on the mainland, and whose only first-hand knowledge of the feverish life of towns was derived from her one winter of school-life at Rothesay and brief visits to Greenock and Oban, it was difficult to realise how any one could fail to leave by the steamer, unless ill or prevented by some serious mischance. The periodical coming of the *Clansman* symbolised for her, to a certain extent, the inevitable march of time and fate. To go or come by that steam-driven, wind-heedless vessel was to be above the uncertainties and vicissitudes to which ordinary wayfaring mortals are subject. The girl thought she knew so much that to her all of what town-life meant must be bare, because of her reading:

slowly ab...
Mary Maclean's cottage.
once or twice, half unco
smell the fragrance of th
where the gale grew in tuft
damper patches, or of the
was crushed under her fe
over-sweet, over-poignant

The peat-reek reached
from the cottage, blen
breaths of the cows that
afoot, munching the cool
der. Her gaze, too, fell
lit interior, with a table
a white cloth, flushed by
wavered from betwixt the
and, later, upon the fi
Maclean, who had com
her, or, more likely, h
ever since the ferry-bo
upon its useless errand.

"Are you wet, Lc
..." she asked, a

"I am very tired, Mary."

"Come in, dear, and have your tea. It will do you good. *Lora-mo-ghràidh*, you should not have gone out in the ferry-boat. It was no use, and the sea was rough, and you might have come to harm; and what would Alastair Macleod be saying, to-morrow, if he found his heart's-delight ill, and that I had stood by and seen her do so foolish a thing?"

"Oh, Mary, do you really think he will be here to-morrow?"

"Surely."

"But I fear he will wait now till the next sailing of the *Clansman*."

"We cannot say. Come in, my fawn, out of the chill."

"It is going to be a lovely night. The wind falls fast: even now it is almost still. The purple peace will be upon everything to-night. I am restless: I do not wish to go in-doors."

"No, no, Lora dear to me! Come in and have your tea, and then rest. You can rise at daybreak, if you will, and go round the island, lest he should be coming in any of the herring-smacks."

"I want to speak to Ian."

"Ian has gone across to Ivor Maquay's; he will not be here to-night."

could just ...
wherry. Ian was nowhere
did not think of scrutinising
of the beached and long d
which lay a few yards awa
done so, she might have p
old islesman standing rigi
overheard his kinswoman,
stood. As soon as the two
entered the cottage, he m
and silently away, and, t
clachan, was soon swallow
darkness.

After the meal was
found herself overworn wi
All wish to go out again
From where she lay restin
Mrs. Maclean put away
then seat herself by the

For a long time
spoke. A drowsy pea
the threshold.

The hot red glow of

pinewood. The dry crackle, the spurt of the sap as it simmered in the heat, the yellow tongues and sudden red fangs and blue flames, gave the sound and glow whereof a sweeter silence can be wrought into what has been but stillness before.

An hour went by. With brief snatches of talk, all made up of fears and hopes, another hour passed. Then a long quietness again, broken at the last by a low crooning song from the elder woman, as she leaned to the fire and stared absently into its heart. The song was old: older than the oldest things, save the summits of the mountains, the granite isles, and the brooding pain of the sea. Long ago it had been sung by wild Celtic voices, before ever spoken word was writ in letters—before that again, mayhap, and caught perhaps from a wailing Pictish mother—so ancient was the moving old-world strain, so antique the words of the lullaby that was dim with age when it soothed to sleep the child Ossian, son of Fingal.

When the crooning died away, Lora slept. With soft step Mrs. Maclean moved across the room, and lightly dropped a plaid over the girl's figure, recumbent in beautiful ease upon the low bed-couch.

reproved herself for her ner
She sat down, with gaze resc
on the glowing peats: nor
have stirred again, but for a
of a low moan.

The blood ran chill in l
her mouth twitched; and
twisted fingers of her hands
and lifeless with the fierce
came of her fear.

But she was not a wor
mastered by terror. With a
sigh she rose, looked round
forced herself to stare fixe
window, and then moved qu
door.

As soon as she felt the ai
brows she became calm, an
left her.

"Is that you, Ian?" she
There was no one visible:
"Is that you, Alastair M

dew: but it might be a wandering breath of air among the gale, or an adder moving through the grass, or a fern-owl hawking under the rowan-trees.

She waited a little; then, with a sigh of relief, re-entered the cottage and closed the door.

A glance at Lora showed her that the girl was sleeping unperturbed. For some time thereafter she sat by the fire, brooding over many things. Weary, at last, she rose, cast a farewell glance at the sleeper, and then slipt quietly to her bed in the adjoining room.

Night lay passively upon the sea, upon the isle, upon the clachan. Not a light lingered in any cottage, save the fire-glow in that of Mary Maclean: a hollow, attenuating beam that stared through the dark unwaveringly.

Neither star nor moon was visible. The clouds hung low, but without imminence of rain for the isles, drawn inland as the vapours were by the foreheads of the bens.

An hour later the door of the cottage opened and closed again, silently. It was Lora who came forth.

She walked hesitatingly at first, and then more swiftly, not pausing till she reached the little boulder-pier. There she stood motionless, listening intently.

... strange noises, sometim
lingly loud, oftenest as if sea-thi
being stifled or strangled.

From the promontory cam
abrupt, strident—the hunger
a skua. The thin pipe of
terel fell into the darkness be
shallows where the sea-mist
the Kyle a muffled, stertorou
near and twice as far away,
two whales were in the wak
mackerel.

From the isle, no sounc
sheep lay on the thyme, or an
bracken, still as white boulde
kye crouched, with misty nos
low to the damp grass, rou
tangled gale. The dogs wer
Even the tufted canna hung
and motionless. The white
had, one by one, fallen like
feather. The wind-death la
all: at the last, too, upon the

II.

SLOWLY, as though a veil were withdrawn, the cloudy dusk passed from the lift. The moon, lying in violet shadow, grew golden: while the sheen of her pathway, trailed waveringly across the sea and athwart the isle, made Innisròn seem as a beautiful body motionlessly adrift on the deep.

One by one the stars came forth —solemn eyes watching for ever the white procession move onward orderly where there is neither height, nor depth, nor beginning, nor end.

In the vast stellar space the moon-glow waned until it grew cold, white, ineffably remote. Only upon our little dusky earth, upon our restless span of waters, the light descended in a tender warmth. Drifting upon the sea, it moved tremulously onward, weaving

twilight of one's own soul; as
as a sigh from one knows not
heard suddenly and with rec
awe; so is this obscure, troubl
of a tumult that is over, that is
that may be, that awaiteth.

To Lora it was almost ir
Rather, her ears held no oth
than the babbling repetitive ch
whisper of the lip of the sea m
and fro the pebbles on the
strand just beyond her.

Her eyes saw the lift of the
lovely advance of the lunar
the miracle of the yellow
golden here and here white
fire—upon sea and land: tl
and yet saw not. Her ears h
muffled voice of ocean and tl
recurrent whispering of the fo
runnels beside her: they he
yet heard not.

deep love there is a living invisible line from soul to soul whereby portent of joy or disaster, or passion of loneliness, or passion of fear, or passion of longing may be conveyed with terrifying surety.

How beyond words dreadful was this remoteness which environed her, as the vast dome of night to a single white flower growing solitary in a waste place.

Inland upon the isle, seaward, skyward, Lora looked with aching eyes. The moonlight wounded her with its peace. The shimmering sea beat to a rhythm atune to a larger throb than that of a petty human life. In the starry infinitude her finitude was lost, absorbed, as a grain of sand windblown a few yards across an illimitable desert.

That passionate protest of the soul against the absolute unheed of nature was hers: that already defeated revolt of the whirling leaf against the soaring, far-come, far-going wind that knows nothing of what happens beneath it in the drift of its inevitable passage.

With a sob, she turned, vaguely yearning for the human peace that abode in the cottage. As she moved, she saw a shadow, solidly clear-cut in the moonlight, sweep from a rock close by, as though it were a swinging scythe.

Instinctively she glanced upward, to see if the cloud-counterpart were over-

At the wane of the last moon
islesman had passed into th
sleep. Lora knew that his spir
have to become the Watcher o
till such time as another soul
lapse into the silence. Was
she wondered with instinctive
was this Fergus, weary of hi
errant about the isle which ha
the world to him, a drifting
from graveyard to byre and s
from fold to dark fold, fro
clachan-end to the shore-pasture
coble to havened coble, from th
of the boats to the ferry-rock?
he know that he would soon ha
to take over from him his d
peace? Or was he in no
peace, but an-hungered as a b
prey for the death of another?
then . . . and then . . . w
this other? Who next upon

silence was an echo of terror. She clasped her hands across her breast. Her body swayed forward as a bulrush before the wind.

"*Ah, Dia! Dia!*" broke from her lips; for, beyond all doubt, she saw once again the moving of a darkness within the dark.

Yet what she saw was no shadow-man weary of last vigil, but something that for a moment filled her with the blindness of dread. Was it possible? Was she waylaid by one of those terrible dwellers in twilight-water of which she had heard so often from the tellers of old tales?

"*Toradh nu féudalach gun am faicinn*," she muttered with cold lips: "the offspring of the cattle that have not been seen!"

"Ah, no, no!" she cried. The next moment, and with a sob of relief, she saw a moonbeam steal upon the hollow and reveal its quietude of dusk. She would have moved at once from boulder to boulder, eager for that lost sanctuary whence she had come—when the very pulse of her heart sprang to the burst of a human sob close by.

She stood still, as though frozen. A moment before, the breath from her lips was visible: now not the faintest vapour melted into the night-air.

...ack and in and out of th
crannies in the rocks, the
piteous sound of a human
All at once, everything b
to Lora. She knew that
near: she did not even dr
was present as a disembo
He had reached the isle af
in some strange sorrow had
her straightway.
"*Alastair!*" she cried, ye
No one answered; no or
nothing moved. But the m
bing was hushed.
"Alastair! Alastair!"
Slowly from a sand-drift
ferry-rock a tall figure arose.
moments it stood motionl
against the yellow shine of t
The face was pale; that o
young, with the thin lips, the
eyes that in sunlight would
blue, the high ...

Alastair was as visible as though he were in the noon-light.

Lora looked at him, speechless. She saw that in his strained eyes, in his wrought features, which told her he had drunken of sorrow. His dishevelled hair, his whole mien and appearance showed that he was in some dire extremity.

"*Alastair!*"

He heard the low, passionate appeal, but at first he did not stir. Then, and yet as though constrainedly and in weariness, he raised and stretched forth his arms.

Swift as a gliding shadow, Lora was beside him, and claspt to his heart.

For a time, neither spoke. His heart beat loud and heavily: against his breast her head lay, with her breath coming and going like a wounded bird panting in the green-gloom of the thicket.

"O Alastair, Alastair, what is it?" she murmured at last, raising her head and looking into his pale, distraught face.

"What made you come out in the dark, Lora-mùirnean?"

"I could not rest. I was too unhappy. I thought—I thought—no, I do not think I dared to believe that you might come to-night after all; but

"Ah," she whispered a
you have been here all th
I not knowing it! Ah, A
your heart crying to min
me rise and leave the cotta
out into the dark. But w
not come to me? Whe
come to Innisròn? Ho
come?"

"Dear, I could not w
Clansman. I left Greenock
earlier by the *Foam*, James
tug; for he undertook to pu
at the haven below Crai
Thence I walked to Dunm
was not well, Lora; and I
on the way that I missed the
as well as the Dunmore herri
Before nightfall, however, I
Archibald Macleod, of Tighr
bring me here on his smack.
at the Rock of the Seafol

shadow. I felt as though it would be better for me to deal with my sorrow alone and in the night, and that it was more bearable since I was so near you, and that any moment I could go to you."

"Why, why did you not come, Alastair? Oh, I longed, longed for you so!"

"Once I came close to the cottage, almost happy since I knew that you were so near to me. The red glow that warmed the dark without comforted me. I thought I would look in upon you for a moment; and if you and Mary were awake and talking, that I should let you know I had come. But I saw that you lay in sleep; and I had scarce time to withdraw ere, as I feared, Mary saw me—though see me, indeed, perhaps she did, for in a brief while she opened the door and came out, and would have discovered me but that I moved swiftly to the shadow of the birk-shaws. Then, after a little, I wandered down by the shore. There was a voice in the sea—calling, calling. It was so cool and sweet: soft was the balm of the air of it, as the look of your eyes, Lora, as the touch of your hand. I was almost healed of my suffering, when suddenly the pain in my head sprang upon me, and I crouched in the hollow yonder, chill with the sweat of my agony."

upon the ferry-ledge. A
you for a vision, and n
But when the moonligh
isle and enfolded you, I
you indeed. And once
and my sorrow overcame

"Alastair, I am terr
not thus for you before y
Great as was your pain
this gloom of sorrow.
what is it, dear heart?
me!"

Slowly Alastair held I
him, and looked long a
into her eyes.

She shrank, in an appr
like a bird, flew bewild
blinding light that flash
darkness—a vain bewild
doom.

Then, with a great ef
him tell her what he had

"Lora, have you heard aught said by any one concerning my illness?"

"Dear, Father Manus told me, on the day you went away, that you feared the trouble which came upon your father, and upon your father's father; and oh, Alastair my beloved, he told me what that trouble was."

"Then you know: you can understand?"

"What?"

"That which now appals me . . . now kills me."

"Alastair!"

"Yes, Lora?"

"Oh, Alastair, Alastair, you do not mean that . . . that . . . you too . . . *you* are . . . are . . . that *you* have the . . . the . . . mind-dark?"

"Dear heart of mine, this sorrow has come to us. I ——"

With a sharp cry Lora held him to her, despairingly, wildly, as though even at that moment he were to be snatched from her. Then, in a passion of sobbing, she shook in his arms as a withered aspen-leaf ere it fall to the wind.

The tears ran down his face; his mouth twitched; his long, thin fingers moved restlessly in her hair and upon her quivering shoulder.

grasses of the isl

A white moth came flut
towards them, hovering va
overhead, and then driftir
almost to their feet. In tl
loomed grey and formless–
thing that might have com
heart or the unguarded brai
again it fluttered, idly this w
then suddenly alit upon t
Alastair, poising itself on sp
and now all agleam as with
phorescent fire, where the
filled it with sheen as of w
falling against the sun.

The gleam caught Lora'
with a weary sigh, she lifted

A strange smile came int
Slowly she disengaged her
and half raised it. Alastair
to speak, but her eyes broug
upon him.

"*Hush!*" she whis-

"Hush, hush! . . . I see a sign from heaven upon your forehead . . . the sign of the white peace that Sheumais says is upon them who are of the company of the Belovëd."

"Lora, what are you saying? What is it? What do you see?"

His voice suddenly was harsh, fretful. Lora shrank for a moment; then, as the white moth rose and fluttered away into the dark, faintly agleam with moonfire till it reached the shadow, she pitifully raised her hand to his brow.

"Come, dear, let us go in. All will be well with us, whatever happens."

"Never . . . never . . . never!"

"O Alastair, if it be God's will?"

"Ay, and if it be God's will?"

"I cannot lose you: you will always be mine: no sorrow can part us: nothing can separate us: nothing but the Passing, and that . . . . ."

"Lora!"

For answer she looked into his eyes.

"Lora, it is of that, of the Passing: . . . are you . . . are you brave enough not only to endure . . . but to . . . if we thought it well . . . if I asked you . . ?"

A deep silence fell upon both. Hardly did either breathe. By some strange vagary of the strained mind,

the low monotone of th
muffled voice prophesying
gates of Sleep and Death.
east the tide-race tore t
Sound with a confused r
haste and tumult. Upon
wind moved as a thing in
weary: lifting now from
corrie, and through glen
and among the birk-sha
rowans, with long sighs a
where by Uisghe-dhu th
moonflowers sloped to the
west, or among the reeds, a
and the salt grasses around
that lay duskily still on th
above the haven.

"Lora . . . would y
would . . ?"

Only her caught breath
gave answer. The short lis
of the water in the seawe
came nearer. The tide

the vast space the stars and planets fulfilled their ordered plan. Star by star, planet by planet, sun by sun, universe by universe moved jocund in the march of eternal death.

Beyond the two lonely figures, seaward, the moon swung, green-gold at the heart with circumambient flame of pearl.

Beautiful the suspended lamp of her glory: a censer swung before the Earth-Altar of the Unknown.

In their human pain the two drew closer still. The remote alien silences of the larger life around vaguely appalled them. Yet Lora knew what was in his thought: what he foreshadowed: what he wished.

"It shall be as you will, Alastair, heart of me, life of me," she whispered. Then, with clasping arms, and dear entreaty, she urged him homeward.

"Come, come home, Alastair, *Alùinn*. Enough of sorrow to-night. Speak to me to-morrow of all that is in your mind; but to-night . . . to-night, no more! My heart will break. Come, dearest. Come, *mo mùirnean!* Hark! the wind is crying in the corrie: it is rising again on the other side of the isle: and we are already chill — oh, cold, so cold!"

Hand in hand, they moved slowly

...ly there was a rushing sou
Ghaoth, Alastair's dog, came
upon his master, whining and
with joy. He stooped and fon
but in vain tried to quell its ec
seeing him again.

Whether aroused by the bar
Ghaoth, or having awoke and
Lora absent from the cottage
Maclean had risen, lit a candl
now stood upon the threshold, l
intently at the twain as they appro

Among the islefolk many wor
not used. The over-arching maj
the sky, the surrounding majesty
sea, the loneliness of these little
swept spots of earth isled in r
waters, leave a hush upon the brai
foster eloquent silences rather tha
words.

Mrs. Maclean knew intuitivel
something of disaster was in
nocturnal return of Al...

ıdow of calamity—craving only
: impossible boon of the young
›w : peace.
n they drew near to her, she
and placed the candle on the
Then, facing them, she came
l, led them in by the hand, and
the door. She saw that Ala-
ıs hatless, and his clothes damp
vel-stained; so with quiet, home-
words, she persuaded him to
his things while she laid some
r him to break his long fast with.
though wearily he did the one,
ıld have nothing of the other
draught of warm milk.
:avy drowsiness was now upon
He could scarce uplift the lids
ıis eyes. His voice, when he
at all, was so low that it was
audible.
r a silence, during which he
›ked long at the fire, and closed
:s at the last, with Lora's gaze
y set upon him, and the dark,
gloom of Mrs. Maclean's, wet
ıe dew of unshed tears, upon
the twain whom she loved so
well, he murmured huskily and
:dly—

green pastures . . . I will
down to sleep. . . . . It
calleth . . ."

... the room, filled wit
shadows in the corners and
dusk where the two women k
the man slept.

With arms lifted as if in i
the elder woman—her face
her grey hair, though touche
unreal glow from the flaming
a low, crooning voice, rep
ancient rest-words, the ancie
of her people, said at the co
of the fire against the hours of

Smalàidh mise an teine;
Mar a smàlas Mac Moire.
Gu'm bu slàn an tigh 's an teine,
Gu'm bu slàn do'n chuideachd uil
Co sid air an làr?
Peadair agus Pòl,
Co air a bhith's an aire 'nochd?
Air Moire geal 's air a Mac.
Beul Dè a dh' innseas,
Aingeal geal a lann'ras,
Aingeal 'an dorus gach taighe
Gu solus gael a maireach.

Upon whom shall this night's vigil rest?
Upon the blameless Virgin and her Son:
God's mouth has spoken it.
A white-robed angel shall be with us in the dark,
Till the coming of the sun at morn.

When she ceased, there was no sound save the low sobbing of Lora and the quiet breathing of the sleeper in the high-backed chair.

Having made the sign of the cross upon her breast and over the fire, she covered up the flame with ash and charred peat. Quietly, then, she placed her strong arm around Alastair, and half guided, half lifted him to the bed in the adjoining room where he and Lora were wont to sleep. The girl-wife followed, and, with deft hands, unclad Alastair and laid him gently in the bed. Swiftly disrobing herself, she lay down by his side, her dark hair mingling on the pillow with his tangle of dull gold.

The gleam still emitted between the bars from beneath the covered peats passed into the room through the open doorway and fell upon the bed.

Alastair stirred; opened his eyes; looked with wild, startled gaze at Lora, then at Mrs. Maclean, who had again knelt, and with raised arms had begun her "Blessing of Peace."

With a sigh he closed his eyes, and

Laidhidh mise 'nochd
Le Moire 's le 'Mac,
Le mathair mo Righ,
'Ni mo dhion 'o dhroch-bheairt,
Cha laidh mise leis an olc,
'S cha laidh an t' olc leam ;
Ach laidhidh mi le Dia,
'S laidhidh Dia ma' rium.
Lamh dheas Dhe fo'm cheann,
Crois nan naoi aingeal leam.
'O mhullach mo chinn
Gu craican mo bhonn.
Guidheam Peadair, guidheam Pol,
Guidheam Moir-Oigh' 'sa Mac.
Guidheam an da ostal deug,
Gun mise 'dhol eug le'n cead.
'Dhia 'sa Mhoire na gloire.
'S a Mhic na oighe cubhraidh
Cumabh mise o na piantan dorcha,
'S Micheal geal' an co 'ail m'anama.

This night I will lay me down to slee
With Mary Virgin and her Son,
Even with the mother of my King,
Who protects me from all evil ;
Nor shall evil lie down to sleep with

I supplicate Peter, I supplicate Paul,
I supplicate Mary the Virgin and her Son,
I supplicate the twelve Apostles,
That evil befal us not this night.
Mary, in thy goodness and glory,
And Thou, Son of the sweet-savoured Virgin,
Protect us this night from all the pains of darkness.
And thou, Michael, guardian of souls, abide with us, watching.

When she looked down, at the end of her prayer, Mary saw that Lora's eyes also were closed; though by the muttering of the lips she knew her dear one was not asleep.

Softly she closed the door behind her; then, passing by the fire, went into the third room of the cottage.

Soon she too was in bed, softly repeating, as the weariness of sleep came over her—

Cha laidh mise leis an olc,
'S cha laidh an t' olc leam.

Without, came the rising sound of the tide among the pebbles on the shore, the incessant chime of wave lapsing over wave on flat rocks. The sough of the wind fell from the corries of Craig-an-Iolair, and died in whispers among the fern and dew-cold grasses.

So went the hours from silence into silence. And in time came the dawn, and an ashen-grey upon the sea, and a

At the window of the roo
Alastair and Lora slept, the
sunflood of the new day pour
joicingly.

One long streamer of light
his yellow hair and kissed th
of a veiled, subsiding mind.
ward it moved, and filled with
the dark-brown hair which la
the white breast of Lora. The
it passed beneath the flower
bosom and into her heart, and
it with joy; for with a smile sh
murmuring, "*Pharais, Pharai*

III.

BEFORE the wane of that day, the rumour went among the scant population of Innisròn that Alastair, son of Diarmid of Macleod, was mad: that, in the phrasing of the islesmen, he had the mind-dark.

Men and women whispered the thing with awe. In the West, something almost of a hieratic significance is involved in the poetic phrase that God has filled with dusk the house of the brain. Not thus is spoken of the violence of insanity—the mere insurgence of delirium from the fever of hate, or from jealousy, or love, or evil of the blood, or the curse of drink. But that veil of darkness which comes down upon the mind of man or woman in the fulness of life, and puts an impermeable mist or a twilight of awful gloom about

[illegible], though he within the shadow, had not ye into the darkness.

As it had chanced, Mrs. M was not the only person who ha him and Lora on their return.

Late in the night Ian Maclea come back from the western side isle, and was standing in the sl of the byre when, hand in hand and Alastair approached.

The old man had been unhappy after leaving his kinsman at Ardf had wandered up among the cc In the wail of the wind alon heights, in the sough of it in the glens and shelving uplands, he l voices to which he would fain not listened, for they spoke of a terro was in the air.

The moment he saw Alastair's dark within the moonlit pallor o face, he knew that his [illegible]

upon his bed of fragrant fern. But, weary as he was, he could not sleep.

Again the vision came to him: and once more he saw Alastair move blindly in an unfamiliar place, with the mist no longer up to his waist only, but risen now to his throat, and with thin tongues reaching upward still.

The long night went drearily past. When the day was come, Ian rose and let out the kye. The sweet freshness of the air was as balm to his weariness. The wind blew cool upon his brows, and a breath of the sea mingled with the myriad suspiration of the earth and gave him the intoxication of the dawn. His eyes grew brighter, his step firmer, his mien no longer that of profound dejection; and when Ghaoth came leaping towards him, and barked about the half amused, half angry cows —who stopped to plash their hooves in the thick white dew, against which the warm breaths fell revolvingly like grey whorls of steam, and to swing their great horns against their flanks, wild and shaggy as the brown hill-sides in autumn — then all the gloom of the night went from him.

"Mayhap it was but a dream," he muttered: "and who can tell the folly of the mind?"

Then, with Ghaoth's help, he got the

kine upward to the high
where the thyme was so
clustered as it was among t
hair of the isle-grass.

It seemed to him as th
larks on Innisròn were sir
time and just there, everyw
and above him. In the birk
was a mavis that was as a
from music spilled intoxic
the burn, the merles calle
and called yet again, and o
sweet and blithe, and with
less cries of mirth and joy
gorse-bush, yellow with blo
almost to pain, and fille
murmur of the wild-bee ar
thin hum of the wood-was
hammer flitted to and fro,
tweet — tweet — tweet—o-o-
sweet!

The sky was almost clc

though they were snow-dust or sea-spray, before the flying feet of the Weaver of the Winds.

As soon as Ian had reached the last dyke, and had seen "Righ-geal" lead his impatient following towards the uplands, he stood swaying his grey head slowly to and fro, with his right hand moving automatically in rhythmic accord, while he repeated the familiar "Rann Buachailleachd," or Rune on the driving of the cattle to the pastures :—

Siubhal beinne, siubhal coille,
Siubhal gu rèidh fada, farsuinn,
Banachag Phadruig ma'n casan,
'S gu fuic mise slàn a rithisd sith.
An seun a chuir Moire mu 'buar,
Moch 'us anmoch 'sa tigh'n bhuaidh',
Ga'n gleidheadh O pholl, O eabar.
O fheithe, O adh'rcean a cheile,
O liana' na Craige-Ruaidhe,
'S o Luaths na Fèinne.
Banachag Phadruig ma'r casan,
Gu'm bu slàn a thig sibh dhachaidh.

Wandering o'er uplands, wandering thro' woods,
Hence and far away wander ye still,
St. Patrick's own milkmaid attend your steps
Till safe I see you return to me again.
The charm that Mary made to her cattle,
Early and late, going and coming from pasture,
Still keep you safe from quagmire and marsh,
From pitfalls and from each other's horns,

Then, calling Ghaoth from ... scattered kye, he turned and ... way back to the clachan.

When he entered Mrs. ... cottage, where his breakfast of ... was ready, he made and rec... usual salutation of blessing: ... sat down in silence.

The room was full of sunligh... that Mrs. Maclean had hung ... of bracken from an iron hoo... it shielded the peat-fire and ... of the flame burn unchecked.

He did not look at Alas... indeed, all the morning-blith... gone out of the eyes of th... Not that any there noticed ... nity. Mrs. Maclean move... and fro. Alastair sat brooc... leathern chair before the fi... a stool at his feet, with h... glasnt in his left and her

Then, restlessly, he began to pace to and fro. Repressing her tears, Lora seated herself at the table and tried to eat, hopeful that she might thus induce him to do likewise. Mrs. Maclean followed her example, but ate in silence. She had almost ended, when Lora saw that she had abruptly laid down her spoon and was looking intently at Ian.

The old man now followed every motion of the invalid with a look as of one fascinated. When, suddenly, Alastair turned, went to the door and crossed the threshold, Ian rose and followed.

A few seconds later he came back, his withered face almost as white as his hair.

Mrs. Maclean met him ere he could speak.

"Not a word before *her*," she whispered. "Meet me at the byre: I shall be there in a minute or two."

But just then Lora rose and went out.

"Ian Maclean, what is it?"

"Mary, my kinswoman, he is not alone."

"Not alone?"

"I have seen *the other*."

She knew now what he meant. He had seen the shadow-self, the phantasm of the living that, ere death, is often

how, sometimes, one may le
the mien of the phantasm
hidden in the aspect of the d

"Last night," Ian went on
voice, "I had the sight again
the mist of death as high abo
when a man is sunken in a
up to the eyes."

"Well? I know you have
say."

"Aye."

"Speak, Ian!"

With a long, indrawn breat
man resumed in a slow, reluct

"When I came in, a little a
the sorrow there was on ev
My vision, too, came back u
and I had trouble. I mea
and go out quickly. But w
Alastair began to move abo
that he was not alone. I
other at once. There coul

out to speak. With a gesture,
r, she signed to Ian to con-

e, there was a difference. I
against my eyes; but when I
ed him yonder I saw what I saw,
hat killed my hope."
peak, speak, Ian!"
n all things the same but one,
that was in the eyes, in the ex-
sion. Those of Mr. Alastair were
and lightless, and brooding low;
se of *the other* were large and wild,
I stared in terror and amaze; and
the face of the thing the Fear lay,
d moved, and was alive."
"O Ian, Ian, what does it mean?"
"It means this, Mary, daughter of
onnacha, what, sure, you know well:
nat not only is the shadow of death
ear this house, but that upon Alastair
Mac Diarmid is the mind-dark that
ay upon his father and upon his
ather's father."
"The curse of Michael be upon this
vil, Ian!"
"Even so, *Mhoire nighean Don-
acha.*"
"His father was the third of his race
n succession who, soon or late, fell
nder that shadow. And we all know,
ure we all know, that after the third
eneration the veil is withdrawn. This

But before Mrs. Maclean
what was in her mind, Al
Lora entered.

With downcast eyes Ian pa
giving a furtive, terrified lool
him ere he closed the door.

It was through the old isle
the rumour of Alastair Maclec
ness went abroad.

Long before the stormy
which followed the beautiful
that day, with its ominous mo
in the north-east, had waned t
ing, there was not a soul on
who did not know of the sorr

Yet no one came near out c
sympathy: no one spoke heedl
either of question or solace
Maclean; for none could b
the two most concerned,
Alastair nor Lora having

been torn and trailed in a way that suggested something beyond the blind malice of wind and wave and the currents of the deep sea and the savage dog-fish. Several cows had ceased to give milk; hens had ceased to lay; and Gregor McGregor's white mare had dropped a dead foal, the first time such a thing had happened on the isle. And now that, unforeseen and in the heyday of youth and health, the worst of all troubles had come upon Alastair Macleod, many recalled how his father, Macleod of Dunvrechan, who had died on Innisròn, had not only once denounced old Ealasaid MacAodh as a woman of the evil eye, but had cursed her ere he died, and attributed his misery to a blight of her working.

As one spake to another, the same thought came into each mind: that the old widow who lived at Craig-Ruaidh, at the head of the Glen of the Dark Water, had put her malice upon Alastair Mac Diarmid.

Some one, in a group by the ferry, reminded her hearers that, by a mischance, every one on the isle save Widow MacAodh had been invited to the feast in the little mission-house, when "*Lora nighean maighstir Tormaid*" was wedded: and how it was well known that old Ealasaid had been

has put the spell of the ey
him—foreigner that she is.'

Many years had gone
Duncan bàn MacAodh, a
who had settled in Innisr
thither a wife out of remot
Long since he had gone
and lay among the few dea
great runic cross at the extr
feulan, on the west of the
was still " the man from I
widow was still the " outlar

" Ian," said Pòl Macdor
the oldest of the fishermer
are said to have *the thi*
though you always look th
eyes, and with good will t
beast. Let you, and two o
go to-night to Widow Eal
do you look upon her and
she is accursed: . . .
. . . and then . . . .'

It was not a subject to discuss further in that hour of uncertainty. One or two members of the group had already edged away, when Kathia Macdonald suddenly drew attention to the appearance of the first three of the returning herring-boats, anxiously expected for over an hour past.

The brown-sailed wherries came in under the lee of the isle in a smother of foam. Already a snarling north-easter was racing over the sea, still smelling of the ling and bracken it had flattened as it tore over the summits of the mainland hills.

The water was of a shifting emerald near the haven; of a dark bottle-green beyond; and, out in the open, black, fretted and torn with staring white splashes and a myriad-leaping surge.

The race of the sea-horses had begun, and no one on Innisròn was at ease till the last boat had come safely round from Ardgheal, the point whence on the yestereve Lora had so eagerly watched for the coming of her husband.

A fiery sunset disclosed the immense and swirling procession of clouds high over the isle—cloud not only racing after cloud, but often leaping one upon the other as flying sheep in panic. Towards the east, the vapours were larger and darker: the cohorts more

As the night fell, there was a
beyond the hills the noise of a b
thunderstorm—a tempest which
been caught among the mountains
could no more lift itself over the
mits than a screaming and wre
eagle could tear itself from a st
whose hide its talons had become
movably gript.

Above the peaks and along the
of the mass of livid gloom, spea
lightning were swung against the w
and with splinter and flash, there w
rain of whirled lances as against s
unseen assault from below.

The tumult soared, hurled d
ward, and fell upon Innisròn.
islefolk listened in the dark with
Roar and crash, and a frightful, te
ing howling followed every blast,
a volcano belching forth avalanche
avalanche, and shaking to the va
the *dithmis* of all the hills. T

lightning and tore in its ruinous might far out across the heaving, swaying, moaning sea.

It was a night for all who fare by or upon the deep waters to remember with awe: for those whose lives, and kin, and gear had gone scatheless, to recollect with thanksgiving: for those whose weal went with it, to recall with bowed heads or wet eyes.

An hour or more after nightfall, three figures moved with the wind across the isle: blurred shadows astir in the tempest-riven dark. Ronald Macrae carried a lantern; but speedily laid it down by a cairn, for the flame could not live.

He and Ian and Pòl were grimly silent, not only on the path through the wind-swept heather, but when under shelter from a bight of hillside or overhanging crag. The business that took them out in that tempest lay heavy upon them.

If, out of her own mouth, or by sign or deed of her own, Ealasaid should convict herself of the use of the evil-eye, her doom would be fixt. Even in the bitterness of superstition, however, the islemen were not bent upon the extreme penalty, the meed of those who deal in witchcraft. The dwellers

Ealasaid bring her own doo
then, on the morrow, her sh
be burned to the ground a
scattered to the four quarte
herself would be exiled fro
under ban of cross, mysti
the ancient Celtic anathem

So wild was the wind a
way, that a full hour passed
reached the Glen of the
and heard the savage r
charging of the endless s
the waves against the prc
Ardfeulan.

As they drew near the li
a lonely dwelling on the
sloped to the glen, they
occupant had not yet gon
a red gleam of light stole
across the forlorn dark.

With a significant to
shoulder of each of his

ı. She might hear, and blast us ith her evil eye. Perhaps she is ven now talking with some warlock r fiend."

Trembling, the three men huddled nder the wall. At last, slowly, and ith hearts wildly athrob, they raised hemselves and looked within.

The room was bare in its clean overty. On the rickety wooden table as a bowl with a little unfinished orridge in it. A yard away was an pen Gaelic Bible, with a pair of horn pectacles laid across the open page. t a spinning stool between the table nd the peat-fire was an old woman, neeling, with her hands claspt and er face upraised. On the poor, tired, orn features was a look of pathetic earning, straining from a white and eautiful peace.

So rapt was she that she did not see hand move the outer latch of the indow, or feel the sudden breath of ıe night-air.

Then those without, waiting to earken to sorcery more appalling than ıe savagery of the tempest, heard old alasaid repeat this prayer:

Tha 'n la nis air falbh ùainn,
Tha 'n oidhche 'tighinn orm dlùth ;
'S ni mise luidhe gu dion
Fo dhubhar sgiath mo rùin.

Bi'dh mis' air mo ghèàrd

The day is now gone ;
Dark night gathers around
And I will lay me safely d
Under the shadow of my Be
Against all dangers, and de
Against each enemy of Goc
Against the anger of the tu
And against the corruption o
I will take unto me the arm
That shall protect me from
And in spite of Satan and al
I shall be well and surely gu

When, after an interval
prayer, the lonely old wom
fully to her feet, she notic
window, and heard the sc
wind without.

With a tired sigh, she
room to close the inside lat
the window, she stood irres
by the noise of

fancied, she could have sworn she saw three human figures, with bowed heads, moving across the brow of the slope.

She could not know that three men, stricken with shame and remorse—remorse which would ere long bloom into the white flower of repentance, to be worn lovingly by all on the isle—were stealing homeward from a vain and wicked errand.

With a shudder, she crossed herself, fearing that the figures she had imagined, or had really seen, were the three dreadful Accursed who drove the spear into Christ's side and the nails into His hands and feet, and with mocking offered Him the bitter sponge.

Slowly repeating—

O gach cunnart 's o gach bàs,
'S o gach nàmhaid th' aig Mac Dhe,

she quenched with charred peat the flame of her fire, and was soon in a child-like rest "under the shadow of the wing of her Beloved One."

When midnight came upon the isle, the worst violence of the storm was over. Nevertheless, upon the sea was the awfulness of desolation, the rumour of a terrible wrath.

All slept at last: the innocent Eala-

afternoon his r
come upon him for a w
had smiled grimly at h
what, and laughed whil
streamed from the eyes
Mary; and moaned betime
out against the calling of
closed his ears against
wailing of a kelpie in the
the byre; and, at the last,
an ague before the fire, fea
informulate terror, but w
crown of sorrow on his fo
the two women bowed the
their hands, speechless with
such a horror in his eyes t
shrank from him with bristl
upcurled, snarling lip.

But with the night came
merciful lifting of the veil.

While the storm raged a
the three kneeled, and Mr
read from the

room, Alastair and Lora talked for long in a low voice.

On the day he had first heard that the seed of life had taken root in her womb, and knew that a child was to be born of their great love, he had known a thrill of such rapture that he could scarce see Lora for the blinding of the tears of joy.

Beautiful she was to all: to him, lovely and tender as twilight and dear beyond words: but at that moment, when he learned from her own lips of her only half explicable trouble, he knew he had passed into a Holy of Holies of love and reverent passion such as he had but vaguely dreamed of as possible.

But now, on this wild night of storm without and more awful dread within, he recalled with horror what had been driven from his mind.

Bitter as was the doom he and Lora had to face, tenfold bitter was it made by the thought that they were to bring into the world yet another soul shrouded in the shadow of his own intolerable ill.

And so it was that, at the last, Alastair and Lora Macleod, knowing his madness was at hand and could be cured of no man, and that their lives were spilled out as lees from a cup, and

ever wandering yet ever
which beats day and ni
by week, and year by yea
end for ever, about th
graveyard on the remot
nisròn.

Then was a great peac
the last time they laid the
on their bed: for the las
their arms around each o
the same pillow their hea
side, the hair about his
with her falling tears: fo
they kept vigil through
the dark—an awful terr
the wrath of the sea with
shadow of Death within t
the blackness of oblivi
creeping from chamber
in the darkened house
subsiding brain.

Ere dawn, Alastair slep
awake trembling longin-

deep and terrible in her ears grew that midnight Voice, reverberant in the room as in the whorl of a shell: a dreadful iterance of menace, a dirge that confusedly she seemed to know well, a swelling chant, a requiem.

IV.

AN hour after sunrise the
a cloud in the sky.
day of June came clad in t
of summer. Sea and land
though they had been imı
that Fount of Life which
the hollow of the Hand
holdeth Tir-na-h'Oighe, th
eternal youth.

The low island-trees hac
fered as had those on the
yet everywhere were strewn
and, on the uplands, boughs
away, and often hurled far
parent tree.

nantly sweet. An indescribably delicate shimmer of haze lay on the heights and pastures, and where the corries sloped jaggedly seaward, each with a singing burn splashing or wimpling adown its heart. From the uplands came the lowing of the kine, the bleating of the ewes and lambs, the rapid whirring gurgle of the grouse among the heather. The wailing of curlews rose and fell; the sharp cries of the cliff-hawks beat against Craig-Ruaidh. High overhead, as motionlessly in motion as the snow-white disc of the moon lying immeasurably more remote within the vast blue hollow of the sky, an eagle poised on outspread wings, and then, without visible effort or movement, drifted slowly out of sight like a cloud blown by the wind.

Only upon the sea was something of the tumult of the past night still a reality.

Around the isle, and in the wide Sound between it and the mainland, the "white sheep" moved in endless procession, no longer wildly dispersed and huddled and torn by the wolves of the tempest. Oceanward the sea-horses swept onward magnificently, champing and whirling white foam about their green flanks, and tossing on high their manes of sunlit rainbow gold, dazzling-

...at joy, and stir, and breath

Hand in hand, in the hot r
and Alastair went idly along
path leading from the clach
promontory of Ardgheal.
of the brine from the sea a
strewn shore, the sun-wrought
of the grass and thyme, of bra
gale, of birch and hawthorn
ing briar, of the whole beautif
warm body of the earth so
the tired senses with a heal
balm, that even the tears in L
ceased to gather, leaving the
softness as of twilight-dew in

It was to be their last wa
sunshine of that day—their
ticipance in the sunshine of li

All the morning had been
Alastair in writing and broodi
again he had talked over with
projected deed, which to then
the one

Great love casteth out fear; but even if this had not been so with her, she bore in mind the menace of what he had said about the child.

She, too, had spent a little of that last morning in writing, though her letter was not to go across the sea to the mainland, but to be left with old Ian to give to Mary on the morrow.

It was close upon noon when she saw that Alastair's gloom was upon him again, though he was now as quiet as a child. Taking his hand, she led him forth, heedful to avoid the clachan, and vaguely wishful to visit once more that little eastern haven of Ardgheal where, but two days ago, she had longingly awaited Alastair's return, and where, months before, he had first won her love.

He seemed to take pleasure in the sight of the sea he loved so well, and in the songs of the birds, and to be vaguely displeased because Ghaoth would not leap to his caress as usual, or else would crouch at his feet with startled eyes and low whine.

When Lora spoke, he answered seldom; but when he did, she knew that he understood. Once or twice he looked at her strangely; and once, with a thrill of awe and dread, she saw that it was unrecognisingly.

liar lover of the Ossianic b
been wont, remembering the
the second son of Usnoth
Etha, to call Alastair *Ailthos*.

"Dear, my dear one, Ail
stair!" she cried, clinging clos
at me! Speak to me! Dc
know me?"

Slowly he turned his eyes
and after a brief perplexity th
went out of them, and he smil

"Let us go home, my f
whispered. "I am tired. It
too sad to go down to Ardghe

He had already caught sigl
smoke of a steamer beyond
Point; and fearing that it mig
Clansman—for he thought
much later than it was—he
spare Lora another needle
Moreover, his growing dread
any one was stronger than e
him.

dreaming through her slow-welling tears, and both . . . . waiting.

Though, at dusk, a heavy sea still ran, it was partly due to the surge of the ground-swell and to the turbulence of the tide, for there was but little wind even away from the shelter of the isle, and what there was came mostly in short, sudden puffs and wandering breaths.

In the quietude of the gloaming, it was as though the sea called all round Innisròn as a beast of prey stalks about a high sheepfold, growling, breathing heavily, ravening.

After the supper, eaten frugally and in silence, Lora and Alastair listened once again to the peat-prayer and the Blessing of Peace of Mrs. Maclean; then, not daring to say any word to her but that of a husky farewell for the night, and fearful even of meeting the glance of her quiet eyes, they went to their room, there to sit silently awhile in the darkness, hand in hand.

No one saw them leave the cottage an hour later: not a soul heard them as they passed through the clachan.

The road they chose was that sheep-path through the heather which led to Ardfeulan by the Glen of the Dark Water. Each knew the way well, other-

cable, together, and han

At last they reached t
Dark Water, and perc
the gloaming the sheilii
MacAodh. This they sk
entered a sloping hollow,
which was audible the h
ing of the sea. Lora k
well. A week ago she h
with Alastair, and remem
whole slope was a mass of
tall, white, and so close-
the green stems could ha

The wan glimmer of t
ceptible now, like the mi
night when a faint frost-
Around, there was nothin
Not a tree grew in that
crag rose out of the sea o
blooms. The low-hangi
veiled all things. It was
grave had been passed,
the gloom of the Death-

silence: here, the dull menace of the sea made a ceaseless murmur about the obscure coasts.

As they entered the valley of moonflowers, dimly seeing their way a few yards beyond them, and hearkening to the inwash and resurgence of the tide moving along the extreme frontiers of the land, a sense of unspeakable dread came over Alastair and Lora.

They stood still, hardly daring to breathe. Both vaguely remembered something: they knew not what, save that the tragic memory was linked with reminiscence of a valley of moonflowers seen in a dark twilight. Was it all a dream, coincident in their minds? Or had life once before, in some unremembered state, wrought tragic issues for them by a valley of white flowers seen in the darkness, with a deeper darkness around, a veiled sky above, and the hoarse, confused prophesying of the sea beyond?

As they stood, the moon—about an hour risen—glimmered through the veil of cloud. As with a hand, the rift was slowly made; but though the light was now clearly visible, it still gleamed through filmy shrouds of vapour. There was no shape, no central luminous spot even: only a diffused sheen which spread for a great span northward and

vague terror
almost unendurably.

The sea called below. L
dered, and drew back a step

A long, wavering, greenish
peared high above the south-w
the sheet-lightning fled shud
northward, it lapsed into ashen
before it was swallowed up
darkness, as a wounded sea-bir
deep.

In that brief gleam, Alastair
and looked into Lora's eyes.

She moved to his side agai
once more took his hand.
slowly, and still without wor
to the other, they moved dow
through the hollow.

There was not a sound about
save the susurrus of their feet
through the moonflowers. Fro
glen alone came any break in the
stillness, the

of ocean. From far across the wave came a thin, forlorn sound that was the crying of the wind.

Minute by minute, as they waded through that death-white wilderness, the moon wove the cloud-shroud into thinner veils, till at last, as the two figures emerged upon the shore by the side of a precipitous scaur, they were of a filmy gossamer that no longer obscured the golden-yellow globe that wheeled solemnly through the appalling upper solitudes of the night.

The tide, at the last reach of the ebb for nearly an hour past, was now on the flood: though the first indeterminate babble of returning waters was scarce different from the lapsing ebb-music in aught save a gurgling swiftly-repetitive undertone.

The scaur by whose side they stood was hollow, and was known as the Cave of the Sea-Woman. It could be reached dry-shod, or nearly so, only at low water, and even then only during calm, or when the wind did not blow from the south or west. For years beyond record it had been almost unvisited, for the cavern was a place of deadly peril except just before and after the extreme ebb. But after the death of two of his sons—one in the effort to swim outward against the inrush of the tide; the other by

... the chasm and reache
summit of the scaur.

The smell of the brine fro
dripping boulders smote shrewdl
Alastair and Lora as they stood
weedy mouth of the cavern.
for the first time that night they t
their backs upon the sea, and n
slowly across the long, flat sla
rock.

It was not dark at the entran
the Cavern of the Sea-Woman, fo
moonlight moved within it as the
of a blind man groping blankly i
unfamiliar place. The arch of the
was clear, and even the frondag
fern and sea-plants suspended fro
lower curve; also, beneath, a ma
mossed crag, just beyond the hig
reach of the tides. Among this
crag-vegetation grew strange pla
but none stranger or so rare as the
grape, or mermaid's fruit - f...

wrote about it under that name, as perhaps the culminating treasure-trove of the botanist in the Scottish West. It is a plant which clings as a tendril, choosing only the summit of high rocks or boulders in some sunless place where it can breathe the ooze from dead or dying seaweed, and can feel the salt air reach it with a chilly touch. It lies low, with its thin, moist, ash-grey stems; its round, pale-green, transparent leaves faintly spotted with livid blotches; and its infrequent clusters of small, juicy berries of a hue of dusky yellow.

The islefolk regard it with awe. Though the fruit is poisonous, and a deadly draught can be distilled from the leaves, a few berries would not suffice to kill. To eat sparingly of the sea-grape is not to invite death necessarily, but to bring about a stupor so deep that for an hour or more no familiar sound can reach the ear, no ordinary shock vibrate along the nerves, no common pain affect the body. If the eater of the mermaid's-fruit be left undisturbed, he will not stir for twelve or even fifteen hours, though the first death-like trance does not prevail beyond an hour, or at most two: while, if forcibly aroused, he is so weak in body and so dazed in mind that he cannot

in the final struggle, they m
down into the shadow toget

The idea that the Sile
come upon them unawares—
about each other in a last
the wave should encroach
deep unheeding slumber—
them a strange elation. Th
was Alastair's. Though he
native of Innisròn, he had of
it from Dunvrechan even befc
come to love Lora, and wa
with each of the treacherous
all the desolate, boulder-stre
habited south-western side of
as well as with everything in a
inanimate nature which was tc
therein. Not only had he of
of the sea-grape which grew
accessibly in some of the c
the western side, but he knew
the Cave of the Sea-Woman

holding in his hand a cluster of limp leaves from which hung snakily several stems of the dusky-yellow fruit.

Lora looked at the berries curiously, and yet with a strange indifference. With that awful menacing sound of the sea beyond, with that more awful murmur of dread in her heart, with that rising tide of death all about them, it mattered little to her that Alastair laid such stress on those small, poisonous things, those petty messengers of a mere oblivion of the senses.

Just beyond where they stood, and at the beginning of those long, flat, inward sloping ledges which formed the floor of the cavern till the abrupt ending over the dark chasm at the extreme end, was a bed of soft white sand, shelving from one of the ledges past and underneath another, and then among rocks covered with bladder-wrack and adder's-tongues and other sea-weed, with tangled masses of the long, trailing dead-man's-hair.

Still without speech, here Alastair and Lora lay down, side by side.

There is an ebb in the tide of human hope that must reach a limit. When this limit is attained there is too great weariness for any further revolt, for any protest, for anything but dull acquiescence.

failing to see into his
of a deeper shadow th
which environed them.

"*Alastair*," she whisp

He made no answe
raised his hand to his n
his tongue crushed aga
the acrid juice of the se

"O Alastair! speak
to me!"

He turned slowly.
he put out his arms, an
to his breast.

"My beautiful gloor
Rest—my Joy—O you
Pharais—all the Pharais
or dream of—if there be i
God, He will have mercy
we do wrong, we sin bel
are doing the right, the sc
But sweet it is—O Lor
dear at the last, after
bewildered pain, to be h

mean, my dear one, what peace there is for you and me that I die thus: free from that crushing, crushing pain and darkness that has filled my brain."

"Alastair! O my dear love—dearest—shall we—shall we meet again after this dreadful night? Shall there be any day for us? I cannot die—oh, I cannot die in this awful darkness . . . thus . . . We are both so young . . . and I . . .

She ceased abruptly.

A low splashing sound, with long-drawn suffocating surge and susurrus, told that the sea had begun to creep forward with stealthy swiftness.

It was not the menace of the tide, however, that froze the words upon her lips.

Alastair had begun to croon, in a drowsy, yet strained, uncertain voice, a snatch of fisher-lore.

"Alastair! Alastair! Alastair!"

He gave a low laugh, as he turned on his side, and with wandering fingers played idly with the sand.

"Alastair! . . . my husband! . . Beloved . . . Alastair! . . . Oh, say farewell to me at the least. . . Do not turn from me!"

"It called—called—called: and she cried to me, Come, my Belovèd: and

...s a neroism of abne
words to tell of it.

Her grief rose wi
phantom, and chilled
heart and to the very
a great effort she stir
and pluckt some of th
swallowed it: for she
her hand the berries he

Then, having risen, \
she pulled towards h
strings of dead-man's-l
weed; and, with thos
firmly affixed to rocks o
she wove a girdle abou
Alastair, and so round h

She could scarce see
task, for the moon had
into the denser cloud, a
luminous veils of vapo
were now scarce distin
the obscurity all around

The ...

her long, black hair, she tied it firmly in two places with the curly tangle of him whom she loved so passing well in death as in life.

Not a gleam fell from the veiled moon. Not a thing was visible save a faint phosphorescent line that moved slowly inward. Lora could not see Alastair's face, not even his body, not even the two shaking hands she held over him while she prayed inaudibly, and with a suffocating, bewildering pain at her heart, at her lungs, in her head.

No sound came from the isle. The noise of the falling stream in the glen was merged in the confused clamour of the tide-race. Shoreward, there was that awful tidal whisper. Seaward, the march of wave after wave, of billow after billow, in vast processional array; squadron after squadron, battalion after battalion, of the innumerable army of the deep: and among them all, over them all, beneath them all, a Voice, loud, reverberant, menacing, awful as brooding thunder, terrible as the quaking of the dry land when the hills o'ertopple the cities of the plain: a Voice as of the majesty of Death, swelling through the night with all the eternal pain, the forlorn travail, the incommunicable ache of all the weary, weary World.

lips, parted as a child's slumber.

It was her last pain: t
ing bitterness of woman

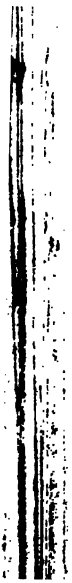
Thereafter she lay
hearkening the tide ru
channel beyond the litt
already damp with the u

She listened to the
water along the ledges.
out of the darkness and
the gloom as a wild be
Ledge over ledge she l
move: then suddenly
blank . . . a hoarse
. . . the hollow re
the billow as it fell h
black unfathomed gulf
flood was swept all that
cave.

A windy sigh arose
The tide moved upwar
the walls with stealthy

upon the sandy tract beyond. Then a long rolling wave raced inward, leapt along one of its ledges, poised a moment, and, breaking into a seething foam in its fall, tore this way and that the weedy bonds which bound the sleepers.

Beyond, in the darkness, the loud moan, the deep, monotonous boom of the sea filled the whole vast void of the night.



V.

THE loud and ter
the sea through
oppressive gloom of
weight of undischarge
everywhere brooded
impossible for Ealasa

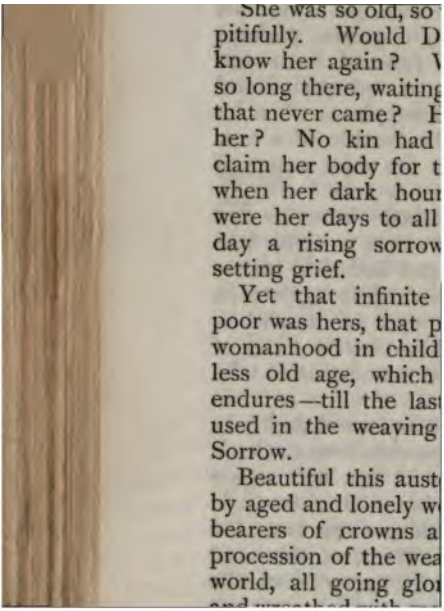
So ill was she wh
that she had moved
the bed in the secon
of which the sheilin
to sleep in the box-
within sight and feel

She had not slep
husband died. Pe
cause that, even after

quent wont of the islesmen, found death in the wave wherein he sought the means of life: and when his drifted body had been recovered, and laid in the island soil, she had remained his lover still. Doubtless, she thought of him even yet with his yellow hair and laughing eyes; perhaps of herself, too, as lithe of limb and with soft, fair skin as unwrinkled and hair as brown and supple as when he had first caused the trouble of a new and strange tide in the calm waters of her girl's heart.

To sleep in the bed where she had lain by his side, where a child had been born to her and had died just as with glad pain she had recognised in the little one the eyes of its father, may have seemed to her a cross of suffering which she was unable to take up and bear.

Or, it may be, there lurked darkly in her mind the ancient secret Celtic dread of sleeping in the bed where any of one's own blood-kin has died: the dread of the whisper that is on the pillow in the dark hours, of the hand that gropes along the coverlet, of the chill breath that comes without cause and stirs the hair as it falls suddenly upon the cheek of the awakened sleeper.



She was so old, so
pitifully. Would D
know her again? V
so long there, waiting
that never came? H
her? No kin had
claim her body for t
when her dark hou
were her days to all
day a rising sorrow
setting grief.

Yet that infinite
poor was hers, that p
womanhood in child
less old age, which
endures—till the las
used in the weaving
Sorrow.

Beautiful this aust
by aged and lonely w
bearers of crowns a
procession of the wea
world, all going glo

For a brief while she lay brooding, with dull old eyes fixt upon the red heart of the peats. Then the gaze withdrew slowly, and the lids closed; as though a bird, flying softly through the twilight, had passed beneath the low-hung leaves over its nest.

She could not have been long asleep, for the glow was still ruddy upon the floor, when she was startled by a sudden barking and whining. She sat up, listening intently. She could hear no step, no voice. The whining terrified her. If the noise were that of a dog at all, and not of Luath or some other phantom hound, whose dog was it, and why its sudden appearance at her door at that hour of night,—its eager, unceasing clamour?

But when, with louder and louder barks and an impatient scraping, the unwelcome visitor showed he was not to be denied, she rose, put on her things, and then, having wrapt a shawl about her head and lit a lantern which she lifted from a hook, opened the door.

For a moment, she thought that nothing was there. Then her ears caught the sound of panting breath, and something wet and warm touched her suspended left hand.

With timid, yet caressing voice, she lured the dog across the threshold.

whining never ceas
was interrupted by l
To and fro he ran, a
out into the night aga
a few moments later i
ment bordering on fr
"Some evil must h
Alastair Macleod," E
as after a brief hesita
lantern and followed
To her dismay, the
her towards the holl
flowers. Could Alas
there, or on the shore
if he were down ther
the tide would be u
and then his doom v
Again, of what avail
and frail, and now with
ness upon her? She
not the strength to m
the dark through that
white blooms: still les

grassy ridge which led to the summit of Craig-Geal, so perilous by night because of the sloping, precipitous hole which gave entrance to the funnel-like passage issuing from the Cave of the Sea-Woman.

"Ah," she cried, as it flashed upon her that Alastair had fallen, or been hemmed-in in the cavern by the tide, "God help him if he is *there!*"

With panting breath she hurried along the ridge, heedless now of Ghaoth, who had suddenly darted off to the left and disappeared among the moonflowers. She had not gone far, however, before she stopped. What use to hurry onward, if all she could do was to shout down into the darkness—a cry that would likely never be heard, and if heard would be of no avail to the hearer?

No sooner did she realise the uselessness of her errand than she turned, and, with shaking limbs and labouring breath, made her way along a sheep-path which led to the opposite brae of Craig-Ruaidh, where Angus Macrae and his son Ranald lived.

So exhausted was the old woman by the time she had reached the farm and aroused the inmates, that two or three minutes passed before she could explain.

cut off by the sea
had wittingly made
intent to drown him
Pool—an abyss tha
what it swallowed.

It was during th
nation to his fat
learned for the firs
what had reached
rumour in the mou
Eager as she was
was now too weak
men, even if it we
to keep pace with
not, as they had sta

She knew that o
was right: that she
going home at onc
paration to receive
still alive. There w
at the farm, where
given birth to a chil
So with little Pòl, th
out once more, lean

the blind way till her hand should slip into that of her husband.

Before they left the farmstead, the Macraes had provided themselves with lanterns, a long rope, and a pine-torch dipped in tar.

As they neared the summit of Craig-Geal, they could hear the frenzied barking of Ghaoth in the darkness down by the sea—loud when caught on an eddy of wind and borne upward, scarce audible when overborne by the moan and boom and ever recurrent breaking surge of the advancing tide.

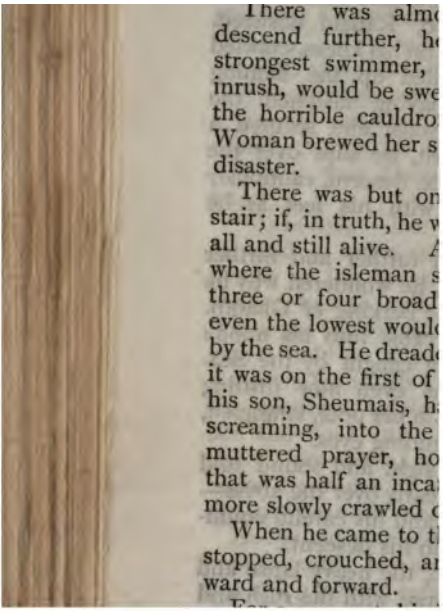
At the dark circular exit of the cavern, they waved lanterns and shouted themselves hoarse: but without seeing aught, or winning response.

Angus Macrae silently drew back, rose, and lit the pine-torch. Flaring abruptly into the dark before a gust of wind, it was like a blood-red wound in the flank of some vast black creature of night.

Having fastened the torch to the rope, he swung it far down the narrow funnel, up which came the smell of wrack and sea-damp and an obscure, muffled sound.

Still there was nothing visible. No shout followed the sudden glare.

The old man stood silent, craning forward with brooding eyes; for now



There was almo
descend further, h
strongest swimmer,
inrush, would be swe
the horrible cauldro
Woman brewed her s
disaster.

There was but on
stair; if, in truth, he v
all and still alive. A
where the isleman s
three or four broad
even the lowest woul
by the sea. He dread
it was on the first of
his son, Sheumais, h
screaming, into the
muttered prayer, ho
that was half an inca
more slowly crawled
When he came to t
stopped, crouched, a
ward and forward.

kelpie, and was he now perishing there with his teeth fixt in the neck of the Sea-Woman?

For Ghaoth, and no other, was the dog that crouched on the lowest ledge; and a woman it was who lay beside him, upheld at the neck by his strong teeth.

He saw the gleam in the dog's eyes, fixt upon him unwaveringly. He understood their appeal. Slowly he unfastened and raised his lantern.

When he recognised Lora, he knew intuitively what had happened. With uplifted arm, he let the light fall all around—above weedy, sea-swept boulders, and the dark, inward-moving flood, broken here and there into a seethe of foam that shone ghastly white in the lantern-glow.

There was no sign of Alastair.

It was clear he was either already swept into the chasm, or had been sucked seaward in the undertow.

With utmost care, Macrae stepped on to the lowest ledge.

Stooping, he looked intently in Lora's white face. Then he put his hand to her heart. He fancied he felt it beat, but could not be sure. Drawing a flask from his pocket, he poured some of the contents down her throat, then upon her temples and breast, with

who had already loo
of Death, and nigh p
horror of it.

Taking her in his
swiftly securing her to
rope, when he was
Ghaoth, who had at
hold, leap into the surg
ward.

The dog went to its
in a vain quest for A
moment's sigh, he tur
had to do.

An arduous and pe
was ere the old islesma
the summit, and felt Ra
by the shoulder and he
burden over the edge.

He would have swo
long strain upon him, h
hastily put the flask of
mouth and imperatively

As soon as he could

might still be swimming in the open or be somewhere afloat, and that Ghaoth might reach him and bring him to the spot where the dog had guarded Lora—almost from the moment, though of course neither Macrae nor his son knew aught of this, when the first ledge-sweeping wave broke upon the sleepers and reft asunder their impotent weedy bonds.

But of this project Angus Macrae would hear nothing further. Was his son mad, he asked him, to believe that Alastair could still be alive, since he was visible nowhere?

"No," he added, "he is in the deep sea by now, or lies gript by the Woman in her hole. But, Ranald, if to search for his body you are so fain, you can go down later. May be you will find the dog, though I think neither you, nor I, nor any one else will ever see dog or man again. Meanwhile, take up this poor soul and carry her to Widow Ealasaid's."

"She is big with child," whispered the young man, as awe-struck he wrapped Lora in his warm plaid and raised her in his arms.

"Aye: God have pity on this lost ewe and her poor, wee lammie. Be careful, Ranald, be tender—aye, as tender as if she were your own Cairis-

and ascended the
brae. In due ti
the door by Eala
With a low, c
woman helped t
in the inner roo
warmed the clot
boiling water in a
for swathing. All
on any hint of a
of the sea is the
disaster for them
Besides—had n
been brought h
more done for
upon him was
only?
Suddenly she
to lose.
"Quick, qui
"take a lantern
across to the
Mary Maclean
here at once f

The boy hesitated a moment, glanced at his grandfather, and then fled into the night, heedless of any lantern, and sure-footed as a goat.

Finding that he could be of no use, and that Mrs. MacAodh wished only his father to remain, Ranald Macrae slipped quietly away: and in a brief while had reached the cave-entrance, descended, and searched vainly for any trace of either Alastair or the dog.

To Ealasaid's unceasing care Lora owed her life. The old woman seemed to have grown years younger. A new strength was in her arm, a new light in her worn eyes, a new spirit in her frail body. With deft hands, she rubbed the skin aglow, wrapped warm flannels about the limbs, breathed into breast and back, soothed the convulsive strainings of the sides and heavy womb, fed the unconscious sufferer with sips of broth and warmed spirit, and often the while kissed the poor faintly quivering lips. It seemed to her as if her heart swam in tears; but, with the unnoticed heroism of women, she let no grief overmaster her, no flagging of mind or body usurp her will.

In the outer room Angus Macrae sat, intent at first upon the keeping up of the fire and the fulfilment of Eala-

in a slow, monotonou
from the page which ca
he opened the book :—

"I returned, and saw un
the race is not to the swift,
the strong, neither yet brea
yet riches to men of under
favour to men of skill; but
happeneth to them all. For n
not his time: as the fishes th
evil net, and as the birds th
the snare, even so are the son
in an evil time, when it fallet
them."

As he read steadfa
through this moving la
Ecclesiastes, his voice ro
a rhythmic chant, and fill
as a rising wind fills a val
the hills.

But when he had read

"As thou knowest

sound at the outer door, and guessed, even before he saw her, that the comer was Mrs. Maclean.

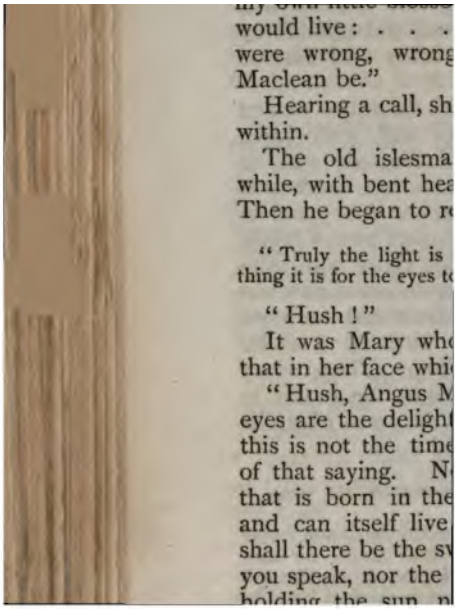
Angus rose, and took her hand. Then, seeing the speechless sorrow in her eyes, he let go his hold of her, and, bowing his head, did not lift up his eyes again till Mary had entered the inner room.

He knew that, with these two women there, all would go well with Lora, if it were ordained that she was to live. But he feared that death was already entered in at the door; and he knew not what passionate sorrow might come upon and undo those who ministered to the woman who even now was in those pains of labour that ere morn should end in the birth of a child. Long he sat brooding. Then, weary of his vigil, once more he began to read, resuming with the verse where he had been interrupted :—

"Even so, thou knowest not the work of God who doeth all.

"In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand : for thou knowest not which shall prosper, whether this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."

Looking up, he saw Ealasaid standing at the door, a wonderful light on her old face.



would live: . . .
were wrong, wrong
Maclean be."

Hearing a call, sh
within.

The old islesma
while, with bent hea
Then he began to r

"Truly the light is
thing it is for the eyes t

"Hush!"

It was Mary wh
that in her face whi

"Hush, Angus M
eyes are the delight
this is not the time
of that saying. N
that is born in the
and can itself live
shall there be the s
you speak, nor the
holding the sun n

"Ay."

"And she?"

"God hath given her strength to endure."

"Does she know all that has happened?"

"If she did, she would be with Alastair. Her mind is dazed. She is as one distraught. My friend, read no more to-night. Go home now, and God be with you. Bring on the morrow what tidings you have."

Soon after the departure of the old man, a great stillness fell upon the house. Lora slept in a stupor like unto death. The child lay upon her breast, as a frail flower drifted there by a chance wind. Ealasaid sat by the bed watching. Mary knelt against it, crying silently.

Towards dawn, Mrs. Maclean rose, and looked out upon the chill dusk. When she came back, she kneeled again; and, in a low voice, repeated a strange Celtic "Prayer of Women":—

O Spirit, that broods upon the hills
And moves upon the face of the deep,
And is heard in the wind,
Save us from the desire of men's eyes,
And the cruel lust of them,
And the springing of the cruel seed
In that narrow house which is as the grave
For darkness and loneliness . . .

Wherewith he tramplet
Us, who conceive and b
Us, who bring him fort
Who feed him in the wo
and at the knee :
Whom he calleth Mothe
And Mother again of h
When he looks at our hai
And at our eyes, and see
And at our lips, straitene
And at our breasts, fal
barren hill ;
And at our hands, worn
And, seeing, seeth all
wreck of us—
All save the violated wom
All save the heart that fo
pity—
All save the living brai
him—
All save the spirit that s
him—
All save the soul he shall
Till he be one with it, an
He who hath the bridle, b
He who hath the whip, ye
He who as a shepherd call
But is himself a lost sheep

Ealasaid trembled. She had never ıeard words such as these before, and vas afraid; yet even more of the strange ntensity in the voice of Mrs. Maclean, n the shine of her usually quiet eyes.

"God be with you, Mary Maclean."

"And with you, Ealasaid MacAodh."

Therewith Mrs. Maclean arose, ooked at Lora to see if she still slept, ınd then went into the adjoining room, vhere she seated herself before the ıot glow of the peats; and, as the day ɔroke, read below her breath in the :hird chapter of the Book of Job.

Weeks passed, and there was no word of Alastair. For twenty days ıfter the coming of the child, Lora lay distraught, knowing no one about ıer, though oftentimes looking long ınd lovingly in the eyes of Mary, vhose face had won again an exceed-ıng peace, and who went, as of yore, ɡirt about with a beautiful silence as vith a garment.

But on the last day of the third veek, Lora awoke in her right mind. Mary had given the frail, blind babe ɔ young Cairistine Macrae to suckle. This was well; for had Lora looked ıpon it on that day, she would have lied.

well as madness or
and so she veiled
lute secrecy.

Not a sign of
what she could n
body, or some tra
she said she wou
Mary to her home.
repaid the most sc
clue was gained—
of the body of C
trawling net one n
could be called a c

On that day of
at last looked on t
and knew it stricl
blind for all its da
haps of that curse
her to sin and inc
she had made a co
to go down as soon
shore, at low tide,
follow Alastair int

Mary went across Innisròn, so as to reach the clachan and meet the *Clansman* for somewhat she expected: and as she was to come back with Ranald Macrae, and he was not to return till after dark, Lora felt secure.

Early in the evening, she sent Ealasaid on a message to Parlan Macalister's wife, who lived in a cottage about a mile along the shore beyond the promontory of Ardfeulan.

It was a lovely evening in mid-July. The moon was at the full, and made a golden dust upon the isle and a glory of pale gold upon the sea.

As she went once more down the hollow of the moonflowers — not so dense now as then, and many withered by the heat of the sun and the month-long drought—she stopped again and again, overcome by the heat even of the dusk.

In her ears was the bewildered, plaintive cry of the lapwings: and, as an undertone, the low, soft chime—the long, sweet ululation of the myriad-swung bell of the sea.

She was weary when she reached the shore. An unspeakable horror of the cavern came upon her, and she turned and went slowly towards the long sandy tract that stretched beyond the base of the hollow. There she

pered that the little
own so soon, and
moved all but the
guarded her own poc

Would God not be
with her — punish
heavily; though this
impossible?

How lovely that
in violet dusk, save w
with moonlight: ho
peace, she thought,
all around her.

Surely the music
song that was dear
her ears?

She turned her hea
sea, and looked idly
though, as she did so
ceased.

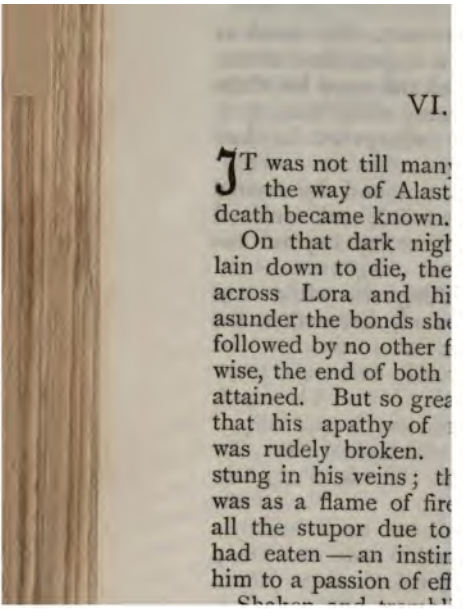
Then Lora stood,
great awe, and with a
in her eyes, in her h

eyes, the grace and beauty, were those of a king—of a king among men: and as a king the naked figure was crowned, with moonflowers and yellow sea-poppies woven into his gold-sheen hair.

Suddenly he saw her. He stood as though wrought in impassioned stone. The moonshine fell full upon his white skin, upon the beauty of his face, upon the flower-tangle wherewith he had crowned himself.

Then, without a sound, he turned and fled like the wind, and vanished into the gloom that lay beyond the dusk.

And Lora, lifting the child and staggering homeward, knew that she had seen Alastair.



VI.

JT was not till many
the way of Alast
death became known.
On that dark nigh
lain down to die, the
across Lora and hi
asunder the bonds she
followed by no other f
wise, the end of both
attained. But so grea
that his apathy of
was rudely broken.
stung in his veins; th
was as a flame of fire
all the stupor due to
had eaten — an instin
him to a passion of eff
Shaken and trembl

over wave, billow leaping after billow and tearing it into a yeast of foam—itself to stagger the next moment, and struggle and strangle furiously in a cloud of spray ere flung a dead mass upon the shore.

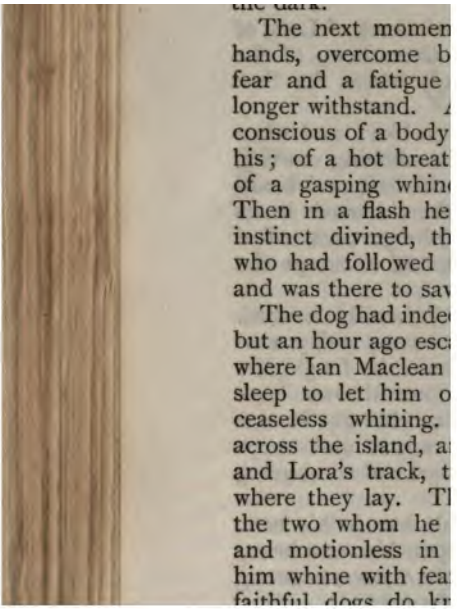
He had no remembrance of Lora, of what had brought them here, of the grave that was ready where the Sea-Woman watched.

But fear was left to him: and when he was aware of something moving across the ledges to his left, and heard it splash through the tide-wash in its effort to reach him, he gave a terrified cry, and dashed seaward to escape the grip of the kelpie.

Stumbling, he fell heavily forward. But it was into deep water; and, powerful swimmer as he was, he fought the surge, and so was not thrown back upon the rocks till, unwittingly, he was caught in a cross-current and swept southward on the backs of the reeling sea-horses.

A horrible tumult was in his ears. The darkness was upon him as a heavy hand. As idle flotsam, the waves swung him backward and forward.

A deathly cold beset his limbs; then utter weariness. His hands ceased to propel, and only automatically and instinctively kept him afloat.

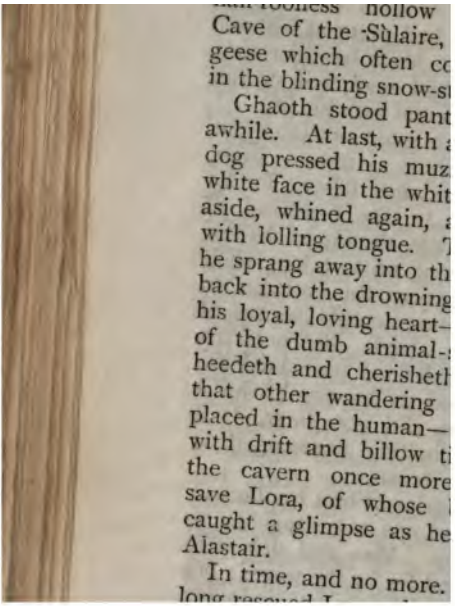


left, he had sprung away again through the moonflowers, and had reached the entrance to the cave after fierce baffling with the tide-race. Just as Alastair had risen and was staggering towards the sea, Ghaoth had caught sight of him, and had plunged without hesitation into the black bewilderment of waters which had swallowed up the friend whom he loved with his life.

Fortunately, the spent swimmer was still near the shore — nearer, even, than when he had first fallen; for he was now close to the headland of Craig-Geal, and was already in shallow water, which swung on to a long shelf of sand lying against the entrance to another of the innumerable caverns of that side of the island. But here the sea, though at full-flood it covered the sand and moved its hungry lip for a few feet within, did not enter, as a beast of prey halting unassuaged at the entrance to its lair.

Ghaoth had gripped him by the hair of his neck, and was now struggling to reach the shore. Man and dog were still flung to and fro by the waves; but the living sport of the sea was no longer separate. With Ghaoth's help, Alastair made renewed, if despairing, efforts.

Suddenly his feet touched the ground for a moment. Then, with a staggering

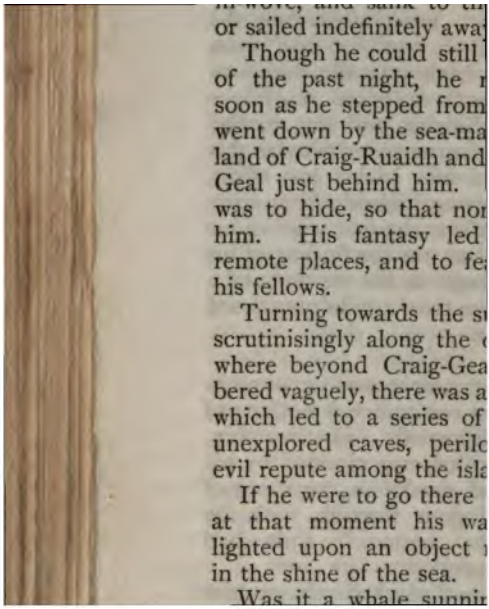

Cave of the Sùlaire,
geese which often c
in the blinding snow-s
Ghaoth stood pant
awhile. At last, with
dog pressed his muz
white face in the whit
aside, whined again,
with lolling tongue.
he sprang away into th
back into the drowning
his loyal, loving heart—
of the dumb animal-
heedeth and cherisheth
that other wandering
placed in the human—
with drift and billow t
the cavern once more
save Lora, of whose
caught a glimpse as he
Alastair.
In time, and no more.

blind instinct, she had clung; but, as Ghaoth reached her, she sank wearily and lay back against the dog, dreaming she had waked in terror, but was now safe in Alastair's arms.

It was thus that Angus Macrae discovered them. Long afterwards, the isleman recalled how he had seen the dog leap back into the darkness. Whether Ghaoth failed to reach the Cave of the Sùlaire, and was carried seaward by a current; or whether his strength failed him in his last effort, and he was swung lifelessly from wave to wave; whatever the first word of his fate was, the last was the finding of his sea-mangled body in the trawl-net of a fisherman more than a mile oceanward from Innisròn.

When Alastair woke, an hour or more after dawn, he remembered nothing of what had happened. His memory, though not killed, was clouded by his madness; and, doubtless, the shock of what he had gone through, with the action of the mermaid's fruit, had further weakened it.

He rose and looked about him wonderingly. Around, were the precipitous rocks; beyond, the sea stretched far into the morning mists, calm, with a silver sparkle in the south-



or sailed indefinitely awa

Though he could still
of the past night, he
soon as he stepped from
went down by the sea-ma
land of Craig-Ruaidh and
Geal just behind him.
was to hide, so that no
him. His fantasy led
remote places, and to fe
his fellows.

Turning towards the s
scrutinisingly along the
where beyond Craig-Gea
bered vaguely, there was a
which led to a series of
unexplored caves, perilo
evil repute among the isl

If he were to go there
at that moment his wa
lighted upon an object
in the shine of the sea.

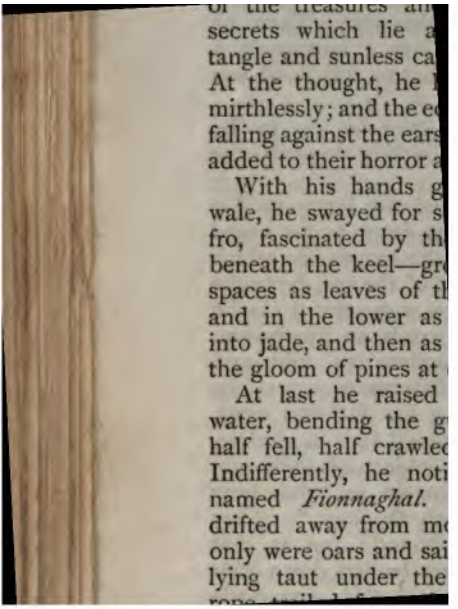
Was it a whale suppir

So methodical were his actions, that none seeing him would believe his mind was so darkly veiled, that his reason was only partially in exercise.

Having taken off his coat, he wrapt it round a heavy stone and threw the bundle far into the sea. Then he thrust his boots into a cranny in a fissured boulder that at full flood was covered.

A few seconds later he was in the water, swimming swiftly towards the derelict.

While he neared the boat, amid a sheen of sparkling foam as he urged his way through the sun-dazzle which lay upon that part of the sea, he broke intermittently into a mournful Gaelic chant, but with words so incoherent, and with interjections so wild and strange, that the fishermen on a coble, hid in the mist a few fathoms away, believed they listened to a sea-kelpie, or to that vague object of their profoundest dread known as "the thing that hides beneath the boat." They were southward bound; but at that forlorn wailing they hauled down their flapping sail, and, with their oars, made all haste northerly to their island or mainland haven. Not a man among them would have persevered in that voyage on that day.


of the treasures and
secrets which lie a
tangle and sunless ca
At the thought, he
mirthlessly; and the e
falling against the ear
added to their horror a
With his hands g
wale, he swayed for s
fro, fascinated by th
beneath the keel—gr
spaces as leaves of t
and in the lower as
into jade, and then as
the gloom of pines at
At last he raised
water, bending the g
half fell, half crawle
Indifferently, he noti
named *Fionnaghal.*
drifted away from m
only were oars and sai
lying taut under the

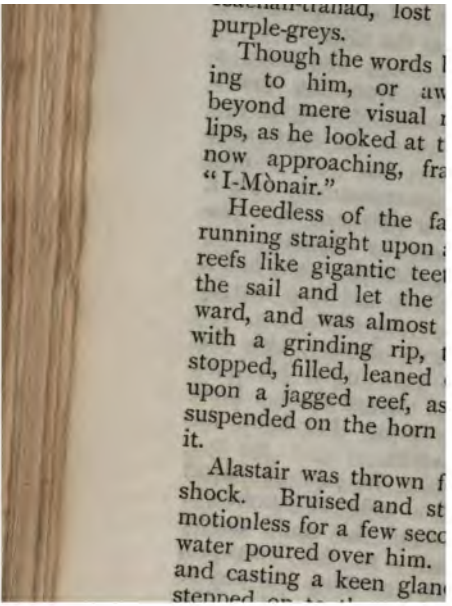
[redacted]

and him, he desisted. A flurry of struck his right cheek. Instinc-ely he put up the palm of his hand feel if the wind were coming from e south-east or the south-west. Then, ljusting the mast and setting the sail, e seated himself at the tiller.

Eddy followed eddy, and soon a reeze blew freshly from the south-ast. By the time the *Fionnaghal* was hree or four miles to the north-west of Innisròn, there was not a mist upon the sea. Immeasurably vast it stretched; blue, or glittering in a diamond-sparkle sheen, or wimpling over in violet hollows, with the white lambs beginning to collect and leap merrily onward in the pathway of the sun.

Alastair became drowsy with the warmth of the glow upon his back and the chime of the sea-music. Long before noon he slept. For hours the boat went idly adrift.

When he woke, he saw an island less than half-a-mile to starboard. Looking northward, he could descry nothing but sea; to the westward, nothing but sea; nothing but sea to the southward. Far eastward, a dim blue line of hills rose above the horizon: here and there—lying apparently against it, and scarce bigger to his eye than the gannets and sea-mews which



...-tràlad, lost
purple-greys.

Though the words
ing to him, or aw
beyond mere visual
lips, as he looked at t
now approaching, fra
"I-Mònair."

Heedless of the fa
running straight upon
reefs like gigantic tee
the sail and let the
ward, and was almost
with a grinding rip,
stopped, filled, leaned
upon a jagged reef, as
suspended on the horn
it.

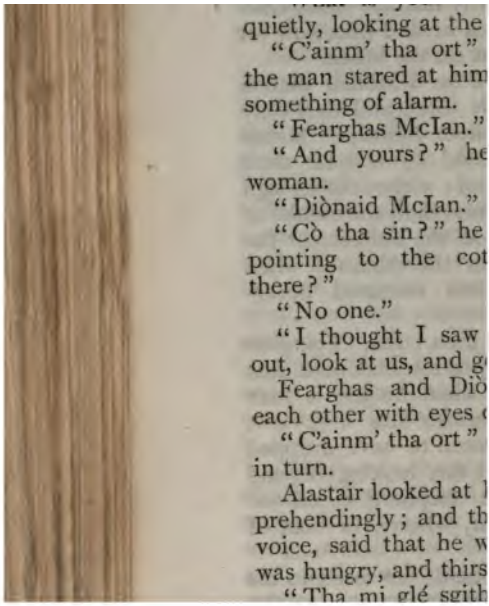
Alastair was thrown f
shock. Bruised and st
motionless for a few secc
water poured over him.
and casting a keen glan
stepped

He sat down to watch idly for the disappearance of the few planks which remained. Suddenly, without cause, he rose, stared wildly at the sea and along the shore on either hand, and then moved rapidly inland—often casting furtive glances behind him, now on the one side, now on the other.

No other lived on I-Mòonair than a shepherd and his wife; and they only through the summer months. Sometimes weeks passed by without their seeing another soul: without other sign of the world of men than the smoke of a steamer far upon the horizon, or the brown patches in the distance when the herring-trawlers ventured oceanward.

No wonder, then, that Fearghas McIan gave a cry of astonishment, that was partly fear, when he saw a man walking swiftly towards him . . . . a man who appeared to have dropped from the clouds; for, looking beyond the stranger, the shepherd could see no sign of trawler, wherry, or boat of any kind.

"Diònaid, Diònaid," he cried to his wife, who had come to the door of the cottage to see if he were at hand for his porridge; "Trothad so . . . . bi ealamh, bi ealamh: quick, quick, come here."



quietly, looking at the
"C'ainm' tha ort"
the man stared at him
something of alarm.
"Fearghas McIan."
"And yours?" he
woman.
"Diònaid McIan."
"Cò tha sin?" he
pointing to the cot
there?"
"No one."
"I thought I saw
out, look at us, and g
Fearghas and Diò
each other with eyes
"C'ainm' tha ort"
in turn.
Alastair looked at
prehendingly; and th
voice, said that he w
was hungry, and thirs
"Tha mi glé sgith

"Did you come in a boat? Where is the boat you came in?"

"Tha mi glé sgith."

"What is your name? Are you of the isles?"

"Tha mi glé sgith."

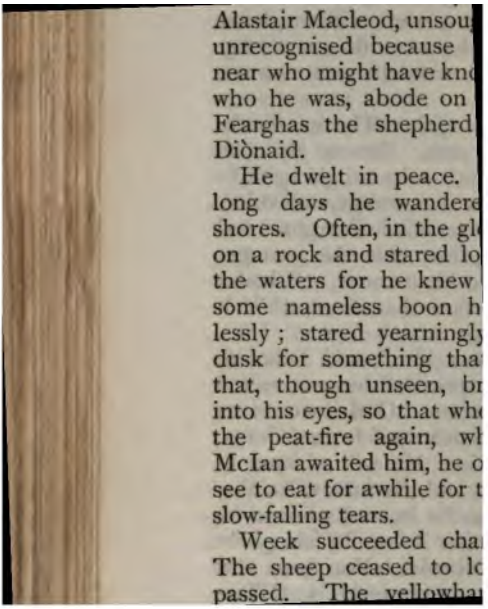
"What do you want with us here, on I-Mònair, where we do no wrong, O stranger who carrieth your sorrow in your eyes?"

"Tha mi glé sgith. Tha mi fliuch. Tha an t' acras orm. Tha mi glé sgith —tha mi glé sgith—tha mi glé sgith."

Alastair spoke in a strange, dull voice. It would have terrified Fearghas and Diònaid more, but that the stranger was so gentle in his manner, and had a look upon his face that awed while it reassured them.

"God has sent him," said Diònaid, simply. "The poor lad has not waked —he is in a dream. God do unto us as we do unto this waif from the sea. In His good time He will whisper in the closed ears, and the man will wake, and tell us who he is, and whence he came, and whither he would fain go."

"So be it, Diònaid. You have said the word, and a good word it is. When this man's hour has come, God will deliver him. Meanwhile, let us call him Donncha, after the boy we lost nigh upon six-and-twenty years ago,



Alastair Macleod, unsou
unrecognised because
near who might have kn
who he was, abode on
Fearghas the shepherd
Diònaid.

He dwelt in peace.
long days he wandere
shores. Often, in the gl
on a rock and stared lo
the waters for he knew
some nameless boon h
lessly ; stared yearningl
dusk for something tha
that, though unseen, b
into his eyes, so that wh
the peat-fire again, w
McIan awaited him, he o
see to eat for awhile for t
slow-falling tears.

Week succeeded cha
The sheep ceased to l
passed. The yellowha

It was in the sixth week, after a time of storm which had lapsed into another long spell of exquisite summer, that the dream came to its end.

Late one afternoon, a herring-trawler lay off I-Mònair. The skipper, a kinsman of Fearghas, came ashore to give and learn what news there was.

Alastair had come back about the usual time from one of his daylong rambles, and, as he approached the door, his quick ear had caught the sound of an alien voice.

Whether he overheard the shepherd tell his friend, in turn for the strange and moving tale of Alastair MacDiarmid Macleod, of Innisròn, of the strange visitor he and his wife nourished, with the surmise that he, Donncha, might be no other than the missing man ; or whether some other suggestion concerning his removal or identification alarmed him, no one ever knew.

But, in the cloudy dark of that night, when Rory McIan and his two mates, Dùghall and Eòghann, were drinking the crude spirit from Fearghas' illicit still, Alastair slipped into the small boat in which they had come ashore, and rowed softly away into the obscure and lonely wilderness of the sea.

Truly, as Diònaid said, God must have whispered in the closed ears, and

west of Innisròn.

With a cry of gladn
forward, shading with
his eager eyes. He
familiar features of sl
lands. The whim took
the boat and swim asho
excitement, he sprang t
little craft rocked wil
moment Alastair had le
keel to drift in the grey
snake, and was swimmin
the two or three hundr
lay between the island
where he had fallen.

When he reached the
dered slowly to and fr
energy having lapsed in
rest. Aimlessly he lea
one boulder, now again
last, the chill of his d
gave him active discomf
doubtfully on the slop

the ridges covered with sea-grass, and entered the shaws beyond. Thence he walked quickly up the corrie behind Craig-Geal. When he gained the upper end, the sunrise shone full upon him. Flinging first one wet garment from him, and then another, he was speedily naked—beautiful in his fair youth, with his white skin and tangle of yellow hair, which, as the sunrays blent with it, seemed to spill pale gold.

He laughed with pleasure; then raced to and fro for warmth. When tired, he stooped to pluck the thyme or tufts of gale. For awhile, he wandered thus circlewise, aimlessly happy.

The day came with heat, and hourly grew hotter. Alastair was glad to lie down in a shady place by a burn, and drowse through the long, warm hours. As the afternoon waned into gloaming, he rose, and, forgetful of or unheeding his discarded clothes, wandered idly northward by one of the many sheep-paths. It was late when, having woven for himself a crown of moonflowers into which he inserted afterwards a few yellow sea-poppies, he made his way down to the sea, and hungrily ate of what shell-fish he could gather—briny cockles from the sand, and whelks and mussels from the rocks.

so even while it an
waves, dancing and
yellow shine and
myriad little cups and
sang a song that filled

Then it was that,
flashing eyes, and pro
with moonflowers and
beautiful in the comel
Alastair appeared b
eyes of Lora, who
time, had come dow
woo and win Death.

When, late that ni
returned, she found
arms, sobbing and
cally.

It was long ere sh
the exact truth, and
if Lora were not suff
cination. But as

allowed to be seen of Lora out of God's pity of her despair.

The night was too far gone for anything to be done straightway; but she promised to go forth with Lora at sunrise and see if that white, flower-crowned phantom walked abroad in the day, and was no mere fantasy of the moonshine.

She had fallen asleep when, at dawn, Lora aroused her.

Without a word, she rose from the chair, wrapped a shawl about her, and then, kissing Lora gently, looked at her with quiet, questioning eyes.

"What is it, Mary?"

"You still believe that you saw Alastair . . . Alastair in the body?"

"Yes."

"Then had you not better take the child with you? I will carry the little one. If he should see it—perhaps he would. . . ."

"You are right, dear friend. God has put that thought into your mind."

A few minutes later, the two women passed out into the cold, fresh morning; Mary going first with the child, and keeping, wherever practicable, to the sheep-paths or to the barren ledges that ran out every here and there from the heather and bracken, and this because of the dews which lay heavily,

the hollow of the hill deviously shoreward Craig-Geal.

When they reache the grassy brae, wh verged, they looke direction. Nowhere sign of any human b moved upon the upl soul moved upon th rowan-studded slo moved by the mar calm sea, so still tha of its lip was inau faint aerial echo of primeval slumber-s into the ear.

They were half-w the shore when Mrs up a warning hand,

"What is it, Mary "Do you see anyth him?"

a white figure stooped, leaning over one of the pools wherein the falling burn slept and dreamed awhile ere it leaped again from ledge to ledge, or slipt laughing and whispering through time-worn channels.

He was like some beautiful creature of an antique tale. Even as a wild deer, he stooped and drank; looked questioningly through the rowans and birches, and then across the bracken where the sunrays slid intricately in a golden tangle; then, stooping again, again drank.

The sunlight was warm about him. His shoulders and back gleamed ivory-white, dusked flickeringly here and there with leaf-shadows. A shadowy green-gloom lay upon his curved breast and against his thighs, from the sheen of the water passing upward through the dense fern that overhung the stream.

"It is the young god," thought Mary; "the young god who, Sheumais the Seer says, was born of human hope, weaned with human tears, taught by dreams and memories, and therewith given for his body, Beauty . . . and for his soul, Immortal Joy."

But aloud she murmured only, "It is he — the Beautiful One — of the *Domhan Tòir!*"

So intent was A
quenched his thirst,
or imagined in the
that he did not hear
were but a few yards
"*Alastair!*"
He lifted his head
"*Alastair!*"
The sudden fear
eyes. A smile came
his lips parted:
"Lora . . . Lo
Lora, my beautiful glo
fawn . . . my little
As he spoke, with
yearning voice, he l
heart of the pool again
forward his arms longing
A sob behind him
ears. Startled, he spran
For more than a minut
tently at Lora and M

Mrs. Maclean made a step towards him, but stopped. The peace that was about her at all times breathed from her, and lay upon him. The benediction of her eyes upheld him.

Quietly she spoke, with her right hand pointing to the sobbing woman at her side.

"Alastair . . . this is Lora, who has sought you far, and now has found you."

"Lora? Lora is dead! She is a beautiful spirit, and sleeps in that pool under the rowan. She walked with me last night in the moonshine. She has a beautiful child that is our child. It is now a song, singing in the sunshine. I heard it at dawn, when I was listening to the stars calling one to another. It is a song of joy about the doorway of Pharais. I saw the golden doors open a brief while ago—the doors of Pharais. Our little child danced in the glory as a mote in a sunbeam. But Lora is dead."

"Hush! Lora is not dead, but liveth. Lora is here. See, her tears run for you—her bosom heaves for you—her arms reach for you!"

Slowly the dreamer advanced. He would not come quite close at first, but there was a wonderful new light in his eyes.

Tigh-na-Pharais?"

Without a word, anc took her poor blind Mary, and held the child

"It is God's gift to us, added at last, seeing tha nearer, and looked at the ingly.

He advanced slowly, ti fell upon Lora's hands, a heart strain with its passio he stretched forth his rig gently touched the sleepi sunray fell upon it. Then upon the little parted lips, of a flower might grow and less in dreamland.

Alastair smiled. With s hand, he smoothed the ch little, uplifted arm. The gently from its mother, kis it to Mary.

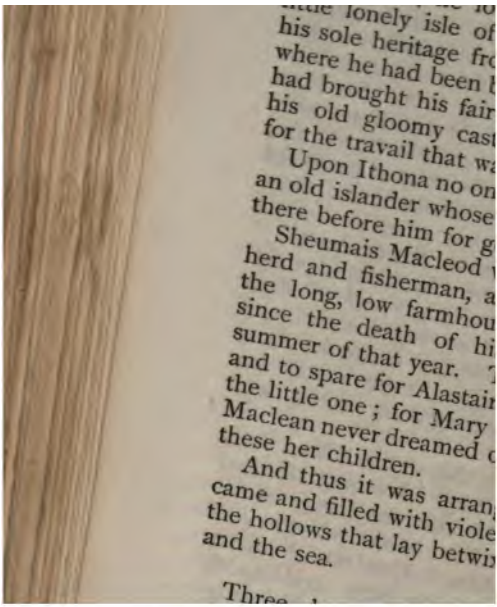
and at once sent Ealasaid out to keep watch and ward against the coming of any one. Thereafter she swiftly made all ready for those whom God had lifted out of the grave.

But so weary was Alastair—so far spent by hunger, and fatigue, and exposure—that he could not put on the clothes laid ready for him. So Lora led him gently to bed; and there, after he had swallowed a little broth and warm milk, he fell into a profound sleep which lasted till dark, and then, after a brief interval wherein he ate ravenously, till late on the morrow.

From that time forth, Alastair's madness took a new form. All of dark gloom, of dread or vague fear, went from him. His reason seemed to be a living energy again, though still bewilderingly distraught at times, and ever veiled.

Nevertheless, that day of his awakening after his long, life-saving slumber was the last wherein the things of his past and the affairs of the present were realities to him. Concerning these, he could listen to little and speak less; and, again and again, his struggling thought became confused and his words incoherent.

Yet Lora learned enough to know what his one passionate wish was. Full



little lonely isle of
his sole heritage fr
where he had been
had brought his fair
his old gloomy cast
for the travail that w

Upon Ithona no on
an old islander whose
there before him for g

Sheumais Macleod
herd and fisherman, a
the long, low farmhou
since the death of hi
summer of that year.
and to spare for Alastair
the little one; for Mary
Maclean never dreamed
these her children.

And thus it was arran
came and filled with viole
the hollows that lay betwi
and the sea.

Three

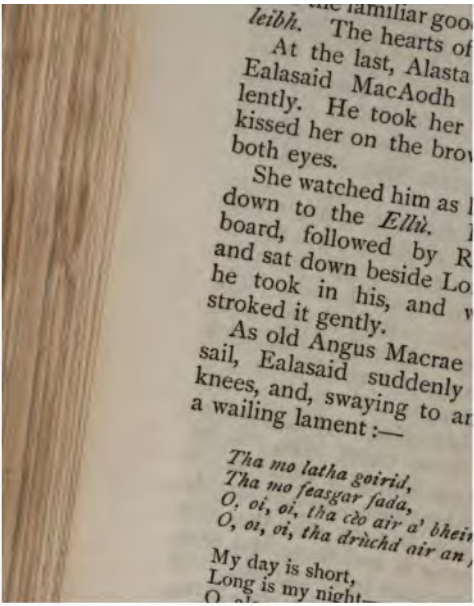
little western haven betwixt Ardfeulan and Craig-Ruaidh. Every one on the isle was there, indeed, except the one or two who were weakly or in extreme old age.

On the water, moored to a ledge, a herring-trawler, the *Ellù*, lay with her brown sail flapping idly. In the stern sat Lora, with her child at her breast, and beside her Mrs. Maclean. In the waist, with a leg on either side of the seat, Angus Macrae, who owned the boat, leaned against the mast.

The islanders made a semi-circular group. In the middle were six or seven old men: on either side were the younger men, women old and young, and the children. Behind were the collie dogs, squatted on their haunches or moving restlessly to and fro.

Some mischance had made it impossible for Mr. Macdonald, the old minister of these outer isles, to be present. Father Manus, a young priest of Iona, took his place, and had already blessed the sea, and the *Ellù* that was to voyage across it, and those who were going away for ever from Innisròn, and the weary hearts they carried with them, and the sad hearts of those who were gathered to see them go.

Alastair, tall, frail, with wild eyes strangely at variance with the quiet



familiar goo
leibh. The hearts of
At the last, Alasta
Ealasaid MacAodh
lently. He took her
kissed her on the bro
both eyes.

She watched him as
down to the *Ellù*.
board, followed by R
and sat down beside Lo
he took in his, and
stroked it gently.

As old Angus Macrae
sail, Ealasaid suddenly
knees, and, swaying to a
a wailing lament:—

Tha mo latha goirid,
Tha mo feasgar fada,
O, oi, oi, tha cèo air a' bhei
O, oi, oi, tha drùchd air an

My day is short,
Long is my night—

Lora and Mary sat with bowed heads. Alastair had turned and was staring seaward, where a glory of gold and scarlet was gathered against the going down of the sun.

O, oi, oi, tha cèo air a' bheinn,
O, oi, oi, tha drùchd air an fheur!

sang the islanders in a long, wailing chant.

Suddenly the sail filled, became taut. The boat moved swiftly before the wind.

A deep silence fell upon all. Then Griogair Fionnladh, the oldest of the islesmen, raised the pipes from his shoulder and began to play.

But the wild, mournful, plaintive air was not the expected Lament of Farewell. It was the ancient Coronach for the Dead.

One by one, every man doffed his bonnet; the white-haired elders bowing their heads, and, with downcast eyes, muttering inaudibly. Sobs were heard and tears fell; but no word was spoken.

When the sun set, the *Ellù* was far on her way—a black speck in the golden light. With the coming of the gloaming, the islanders slowly dispersed. Soon there was none left, save Fionnladh and Ealasaid.

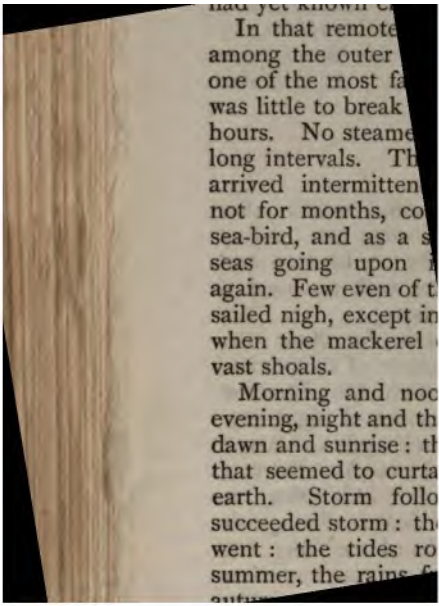
For a long while thereafter upon

When that, to
was no sound th
nightly, save the s
Ealasaid.

VII.

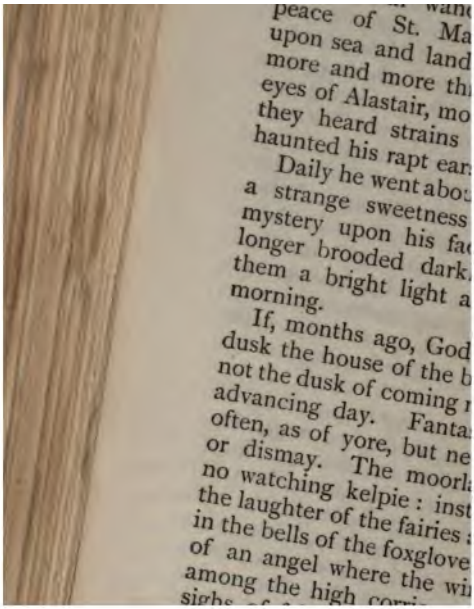
WEEK after week, month after month, until nigh the end of the fourth, passed by on Ithona: and they who dwelt there took no heed of the passage of the days.

There are no hours for those who are beyond the rumour of that "time or chance" of which the Preacher speaks. Day grows out of night, and in night fulfilleth itself again: the stars succeed the diurnal march of the sun, and hardly are they lost in his glory ere they come again. Scarce distinguishable are the twilight of the dawn and the twilight of the eve: and even as the coming and going of these similar shadows are the appearance and evanishing of the shadows whom we know for our fellow-men, so little differing one from the other, individual from



the swallows and martins haunted the island-ways; the wild rose bloomed, as with white and pink sea-shells made soft and fragrant. Then a little while, and the ling grew purple at the passing of the roses; the hawks swung in the wind when the swallows had vanished; the campions waved where the poppies had fallen; the grey thistle usurped the reaped grain. In summer, the Weaver of Sunshine rested there; there, during the equinox, the Weaver of the Winds abode; in winter, the Weaver of the Snow made a white shroud for the isle and wove a shimmering veil for the dusking of the sea. And as one spring was like another spring, and one autumn like another autumn, so was one year like another year, in the coming and in the going.

Save for the encroaching shadow of death, there was nothing to mark the time for the dwellers on Ithona. Mary was aware that not Alastair only, but Lora, was becoming frailer week by week. Lora, as well as Mary, knew that the child's face grew more wan and thin almost day by day. Old Sheumais Macleod was weary at heart with the pity of all that he saw. Only Alastair was happy, for he dreamed; and his dream was of the loveliness of earth and sea and sky, of the pathway that

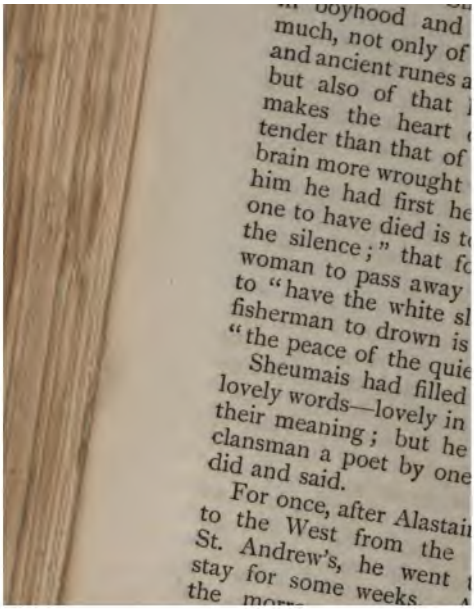


speech about the things that he saw—things too lovely for mortal vision, but ultimately as real to her as to him. Hope came back to her; and then Peace; and, at the last, Joy.

When not with Lora, he loved well to be with Mary or with Sheumais.

In the eyes of the former he would sometimes look for a long time, seeing there the secret home of peace, and perhaps, deeper, the unveiled beauty of the serene and lovely soul.

Sheumais he had loved from childhood. The old islesman had never once been on the mainland, though in his youth he had sailed along its endless coasts. Tall and strong he was, despite his great age; and his eyes were the eyes of a young man who hears his first-born laughing and crooning against its mother's breast. Ignorant as he was of the foreign tongue of the mainland, ignorant of books, and unable to read even a verse in the Gaelic Scriptures of which he knew so many chapters by heart, he was yet strong in knowledge and wise in the way of it beyond most men. For he knew all that is to be known concerning the island and the surrounding sea, and what moved thereon and lived therein; and, in his humbleness and simplicity, he saw so deep into the



sun shining full upon his mass of white hair—not praying, as at first Alastair thought, but with a rapt look on his face, and with glad, still-youthful eyes gazing lovingly upon the sea.

"What is it, Sheumais?" he had asked; and the old islesman, turning to him with a grave smile, had answered:

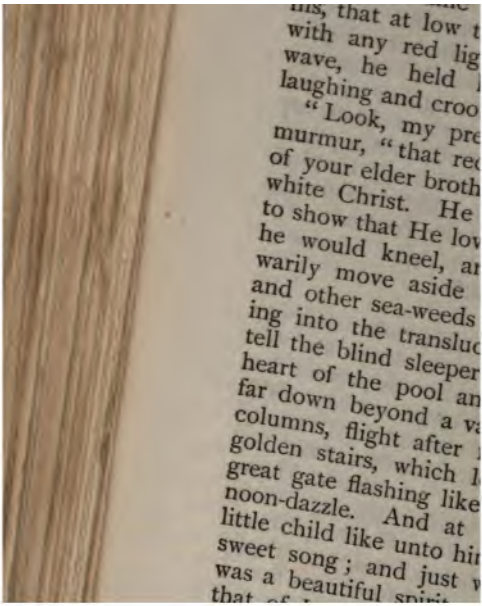
"Morning after morning, fair weather or foul, after I have risen from my prayers and ere I have broken my fast, I come here and remove my hat and bow my head, with joy and thanksgiving, before the Beauty of the World."

From that day, the world became a new world for Alastair.

In the quietude of dusk—and day by day the dusk came sooner and the dawn later—Mary would sometimes sing, or Sheumais repeat some favourite Ossianic *duan*, or chant a fugitive song of the isles. But, towards the close of November, a silence fell more and more upon all. Each had grown a little weary with the burden of life: all knew Who it was that was coming stealthily across the waters, and for whom first.

It was on the dawn of December that the child died. It seemed to lapse from life as an ebbing wavelet from a pool.

The evening before, Alastair had

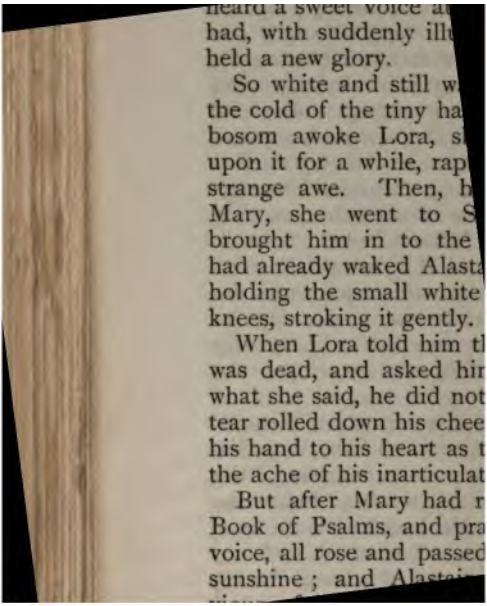


"And in Pharais, my bonnie," he would add whisperingly in the child's unheeding ear, "in Pharais there are no tears shed, though in the remotest part of it there is a grey pool, the weeping of all the world, fed everlastingly by the myriad eyes that every moment are somewhere wet with sorrow, or agony, or vain regret, or vain desire. And those who go there stoop, and touch their eyelids with that grey water; and it is as balm to them, and they go healed of their too great joy: and their songs thereafter are the sweetest that are sung in the ways of Pharais."

Often Lora or Mary would be with him when he was thus speaking; for each was fearful lest some day he should discover that his little *uan* was blind, and could never even open the sealed lids.

But on that last twilight of November, Alastair seemed to have been impressed by the passive stillness of the child, and to be troubled when he looked at it. He had kissed the eyes again and again, but they had not opened; he had whispered loving words in the tiny ears, but they had not hearkened.

All that night he was restless, and rose often to look at the two sleepers in the bed opposite his own. Just before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But after Mary had r
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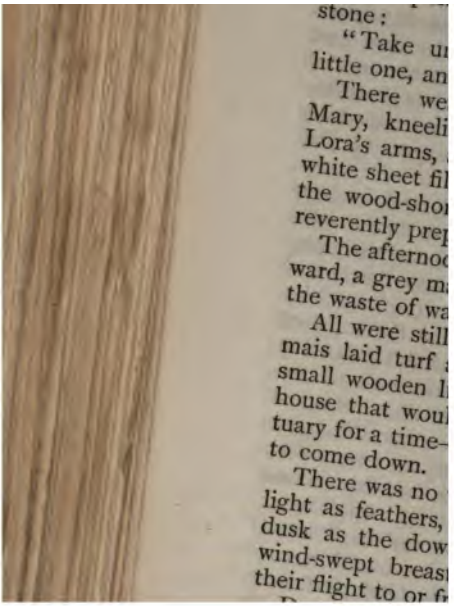
About a hundred yards inland from the cottage, a gigantic pointed stone rises from out of the heather. It is known among the isles as Fingal's Bolt, though neither Fionn nor his son, Ossian, ever threw that huge, flat-sided, fang-like rock. A few rude lines and even letters are still discernible on the side next the sun; but there is probably none who could decipher that old-world rune, carved in bygone ages by the hand of a Druid.

Of all places in the island, except the rocky headlands whose flanks were laved by the sea, this Stone of the Past, as Sheumais called it, was that most frequented by Alastair. At its base he had listened, as a boy, to the tales of the old islander; beneath it, his fantasy now persuaded him, was one of the hidden ways that led to that House of Paradise of which he so often dreamed.

There the four silent mourners met that afternoon to fulfil the wish of one among them, who loved to think that his little *uan* would come back some moonshine night or in a still dawn, and, taking their hands, lead his father and mother by that secret pathway through *Domham Tòir* to *Tir-na-h'Oigh*, whence, in good time, they would arise and go up into Pharais.

Lora had already been on the spot



stone:

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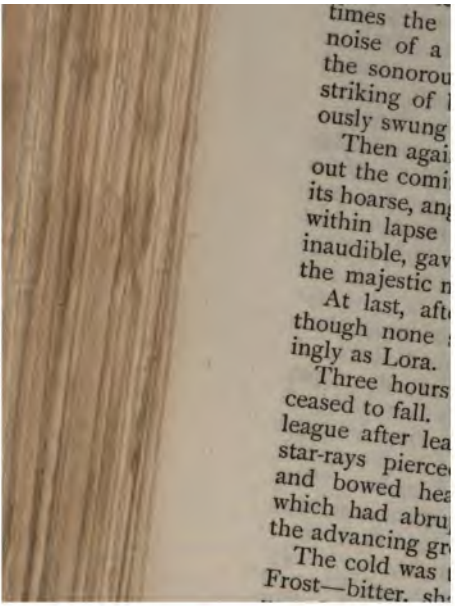
The grey-gloom thickened. Already the sea was obscured. Its voice was audible the more loudly . . . a calling voice; but dull, listless, melancholy with ancient, unforgotten pain and all its burthen of immemorial lore.

The four mourners rose. The two women, with bowed heads, murmured words of prayer and farewell. Sheumais, crossing himself, muttered:—"Deireadh gach comuinn, sgaoileadh; deireadh gach cogaidh, sìth"—"the end of all meetings, parting; the end of all striving, peace." Alastair looked eagerly through the snow-dusk lest the child should come again at once and go by them unseen.

By the time they reached home, there was a thick twilight all about them. A little later, looking out into the night, they saw the flakes drift over and past them like a myriad of winged things hurrying before a wind that pursued, devouring. The island lay in a white shroud. At the extreme margin, a black, pulsating line seemed to move sinuously from left to right.

Suddenly a deeper sound boomed from the sea, though no wind ruffled the drifts which already lay thick in the hollows. Till midnight, and for an hour beyond, this voice of the sea was as the baying of a monstrous hound.



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and softly opened and closed the door, stepped out into the snow.

His breath caught with the cold, and a greater weakness even than that customary of late made him reel, then lean against the wall for a few minutes.

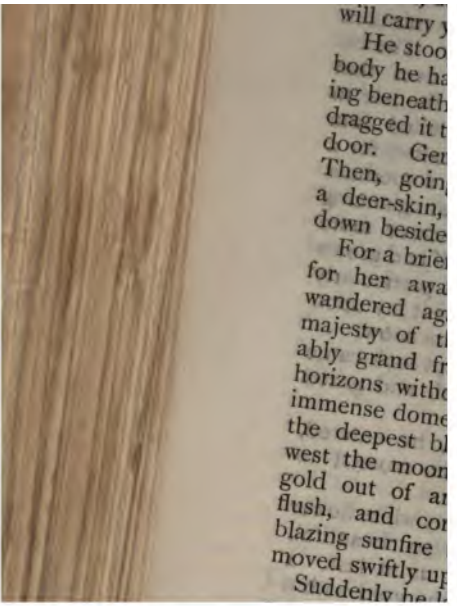
Soon his faintness passed. The exceeding beauty of sunrise over that vast stretch of waters, over the isle in its stainless white shroud, filled him with an exalted joy. Thereafter, for a time, he walked to and fro; sometimes staring absently seaward, again glancing curiously at his shadow—scarce more insubstantial than he himself had grown within the last month, and particularly within the last few days—as it lay upon or moved bluely athwart the snow.

After a brief space, a rapt look came into his face. He turned, and gazed expectantly at the door.

No one coming forth, he entered, and, with a loving smile, crossed to Lora's bed.

"Sweetheart . . . my white flower . . . come. It is so beautiful. Pharais has opened to us at last. I can see the steps gleaming gold within the yellow shine of the sun. Beyond, I saw a mist of waving wings. Come, Lora . . . Come!"

Cold and white was she as the snow. Alastair bent, kissed her lips, but was



God has given me back to you. My trouble is healed. Speak to me, dear; too great is my happiness!"

No sound: no movement of the hands: no stir of the closed eyelids.

"Lora!"

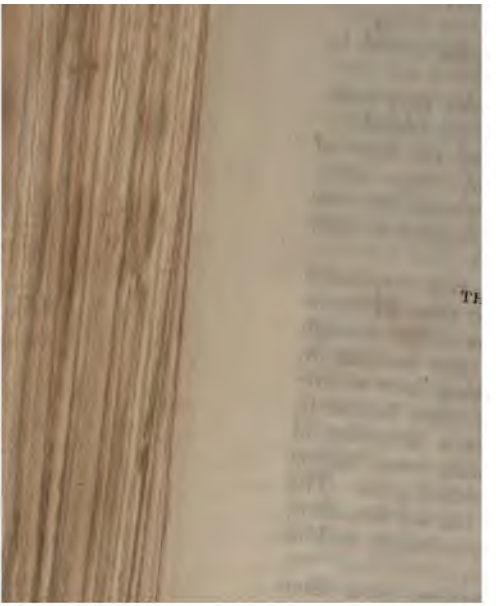
It was strange. But he would be patient.

Idly he watched a small, grey snow-cloud passing low above the island.

A warm breath reached the heart of it, and set the myriad wings astir. Down, straight down above the isle and for a few fathoms beyond it, they fluttered waveringly.

The fall was like a veil suspended over Ithona: a veil so thin, so transparent, that the sky was visible through it as an azure dusk; and beneath it, the sea as a blue-flowing lawn whereover its skirts trailed; while behind it, the rising sunfire was a shimmer of amber-yellow that made every falling flake glisten like burnished gold. The wind was utterly still; the sky cloudless, but for that thin, evanishing veil of dropping gold.

The sea lay breathing in a deep calm all around the isle. But, from its heart that never slumbers, rose as of yore, and for ever, a rumour as of muffled prophesyings, a Voice of Awe, a Voice of Dread.



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